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LONG AGO.

E. NESMIT.

Long ago, when youth was gay,
We two dreamed our lives should grow
Like two flowers in one sweet May—
And we told each other so.
You have gone: Time's finger's gray
Blind my eyes with showered snow;
Hope and youth look far away—
Long ago.

Yet the summer winds, I know,
Will blow soft, one perfect day,
Melt the snow or roses strow:
"Ah, what cold winds used to blow
When I was alone," you'll say—
"Long ago!"

A Strange Wooing.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN SEARCH OF HIM," "WHICH WAS HER DEAREST?" "UNDER A CLOUD," "A SLEEPING PRINCESS," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

A SMALL daintily-appointed brougham, drawn by a pair of sleek young horses, rolled swiftly out of the Park, and stopped before one of the smallest houses in Park Lane. A young lady stepped from the carriage and turned to the footman who had opened the door.

"Theophile," she said, "I shall want the carriage again in two hours' time. I am going to Paddington to meet Mr. Lisle by the 4.10 express from Windsor."

"*Oui mademoiselle.*"

There was something remarkable in the aspect of this French footman—his dark handsome face attracted, but the sinister expression of his eyes repelled one.

There was one fact however which a good judge of character might undoubtedly gather from the expressive face. The man was devoted to the service of the lady then passing up the steps of the pretty house.

His eyes followed her until she disappeared within the house; then he turned, laconically repeated his orders to the coachman in perfect English, ascended the box, and the carriage was driven round to the stables.

His mistress walked up-stairs, drawing off her gloves as she did so. The door of the boudoir on the half-landing was open, and, lightly as she trod upon the rich soft carpet, the sound of her footsteps was heard within.

"Cora—is that you?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Come here."

Cora Beaufort walked into the room. It was a luxurious little sanctum, strewed with fashionable litter; and Mrs. Beaufort sat at a devonport, writing notes upon pale-blue paper with gold initials.

She raised a puckered, peevish face to her daughter as she entered.

"Cora," she said in shrill tones, "I do believe that you will be the death of me!"

Cora looked back over her shoulder, then quietly proceeded to cross the room and closed the door.

"Kirby is laying the lunch," she said calmly; "I don't want him to hear all you have to say to me. Now, mamma, what is it?"

The mother surveyed her daughter with reluctant admiration; and certainly Cora, as she stood by the window, her two firm white hands resting on the side of a large pot of heath, was a daughter to be prized by any mother.

She could no longer be described as a girl; she was an exceedingly handsome young woman. Her figure was beautiful—tall, slim, and pliant, and a Regent Street dressmaker did it full justice.

Her hair, now dressed with the utmost care and attention to the prevailing mode, was of a light brown shade; her complexion was fair, and her features, with one exception, were not remarkable; but, when once she raised the heavy fringe of jet-black lashes, it was as though some mocking spirit looked out from her large lustrous black eyes, which were, by turns, languid and fiery, tender and fierce.

They were Cora Beaufort's best weapon, and no one understood the use of them better than she did. Just now they were turned upon her mother, with an expression with which Mrs. Beaufort was frequently favored,—dark, dangerous—inscrutable.

Cora knew she was to be scolded, and was prepared for the usual tussle, confident that the result would be the same as usual—victory to herself.

"I repeat, you are killing me!" said Mrs. Beaufort. "You have no consideration, no regard for my feelings—not the slightest; you never have had, ever since you were a child! Is it really true that you have refused Mr. Bramwell?"

"Yes; it's true. He proposed the night before last, at the Hamertons' dance."

"Things have come to a climax," said her mother, when her indignation had sufficiently subsided to let her speak. "I will not endure this behavior from you any longer, Cora! What does it mean? What end have you in view? None that I can see, except to make a fool of your mother before everybody. You insist on staying in town after every one else has left, with the sole object, apparently, of attending this insane wedding-dance of the Hamertons'. Why on earth Clara Hamerton must needs be married in August, no tongue can tell; but, of course, every one concluded that you stayed because you knew Bramwell would be there. You have all long led me to expect you would marry him. You told me you liked him——"

"No, I did not mamma! I only said I liked him better than Fred Avery."

"You said so on purpose to deceive me! You let me go on inviting him to the house in the most marked manner, so that he confidently expected his suit would be successful, and he writes to complain that I have treated him very cruelly, buoying him up with delusive hopes."

"No one," said Cora scornfully, "has a right to 'confidently expect' anything from me. I could not help your asking him to the house."

"Cora, you will drive me quite mad!" exclaimed her mother passionately. "I confess I don't fathom your motives——"

"No; I don't suppose you do," answered Cora.

"Will you graciously condescend to enlighten me on this one point," cried Mrs. Beaufort, rising and standing in a denunciatory attitude before her daughter—"why on earth did you allow me to go on inviting this man if you meant to refuse him?"

The girl paused a few moments before replying, as if wondering whether it would be safe to show her hand. At length she said slowly:

"Because I wanted to stay in town; and I knew, if you thought there was nothing going on, you would ship me off directly somewhere else, to offer me for the inspection of a new set of eligible bachelors!"

"At last I have an answer I can understand," said her mother, with bitter irony. "That reason is worthy of you—selfish and worldly. But what I utterly fail to see is, what your motive was in staying in town so long. Perhaps you could explain that too?"

There was no answer this time.

"I do not understand you," continued Mrs. Beaufort. "I confess I do—not—understand you. Knowing you as I do—how selfish, how worldly you are and have always been—I can't see what aim you have in view. Do you realise, Cora, that you are more than six-and-twenty? Why, your looks might go—any day!" she cried, with tragic emphasis. "Are you so conceited as to think that you can go on flirting till you're forty, and then pick up a rich husband for asking?"

"Do you know, mamma," said Cora, "that I wish sometimes you would speak—not quite so vulgarly? You are not a vulgar woman, you know; but any one who heard your last speech would certainly think you were."

"I'm sure you are enough to try the temper of a saint! I shall certainly complain to Lisle of your conduct, Cora."

"Oh, yes; of course you must! But don't bother the poor old fellow about it the very first night he comes home. I want to be amused; and he wouldn't like to have to send me up-stairs in disgrace, to dine in the nursery, would he?"

"Cora, how can you trifle like this?"

"Why not? Worldliness and selfishness must trifle sometimes."

"Oh, you are as hard as a stone! There is no making any impression upon you. If you were different from what you are, I should really be inclined to believe what Lady Kilmington said about you."

Cora paused in the doorway, as she was about to leave the room.

"Pray, what did Lady Kilmington say about me?"

"That she felt sure you must have a secret attachment."

There was a moment's silence.

"I suppose you know me too well to believe that?"

"My dear, yes! Of course she alluded to poor Lord Glanvil. I told her that you had doubtless felt his death very much. One must be prudent, you know, my dear: but of course I could have told her that you never cared for him when he was living, and remembered him only with a sense of relief when he was dead."

"Then you would have told a horrible falsehood! I loved Guy—yes, I really do think I loved Guy as well as I loved Lisle. So now perhaps you know rather more than you knew before!" cried Cora, advancing once more into the room, her eyes gleaming with passion.

"My dear," said her mother, with a calm smile, "do you really fancy I know you so little as to believe that you have remained single all these years for Lord Glanvil's sake? No, Cora, that won't quite do! Do you think I had no eyes? I knew you were not in love with him."

For answer Cora broke into song. She darted across the room to the piano, and began to accompany herself:

"How could I tell I should love thee to-day,
When that day I held not dear?
How could I tell I should love thee away,
When I did not love thee anear?
Yea, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,
I remember all that I said;
And now I shall see thee no more, no more,
Till the sea—till the——"

Her voice was a soprano of exceptional power and quality. The expression she threw into the words was terrible; and when, suddenly, her voice failed, she burst into tears, her mother rushed to her side, with an exclamation of horror. She had not seen her daughter weep for years.

Cora leaned her cheek against the keys of the piano for a few moments, quite unable to subdue her feelings. Then she gradually checked her tears, wiped her eyes, and slowly raised her head.

Mrs. Beaufort put her arms round her and stroked her hair.

"Mother," said Cora presently, "I don't think I am well. I don't want to stay in London any longer; I want a change. Will you and Lisle settle where we shall go and let us be off as quickly as possible? And, for pity's sake don't bother me any more about Mr. Bramwell; I loathe the sound of his name!"

Then she arose, took up her hat and gloves, and walked up-stairs to her bedroom. She glanced impatiently into the mirror at the great passionate eyes still suffused with tears. Then she seated herself at the table, drew out her keys, and unlocked her dressing-case with trembling fingers.

She lifted out the trays, glittering with trinkets of various descriptions. She lifted, with a petulant exclamation, a ball-programme, which once, not long ago, had seemed worth preserving. It was torn in two now, and the pieces were tossed upon the ground.

At last, underneath everything else, she found what she sought—a large white envelope, from which she withdrew a photograph of a young man with a bright whimsical face and eyes that were not without a touch of melancholy; a sheet of paper written over with verses in a firm masculine hand, and inscribed, "To Cora, who has my heart;" a cluster of withered Celine Forrestier roses—and that was all.

"Oh, my love, have you not forgiven me yet?" she said, holding the photograph against her cheek. "I have waited patiently all these weary, weary years—eight years beloved! It is a sore trial of a woman's faith; but I deserve it! I was weak and fickle, and I never knew till afterwards how much you cared. They scolded me and persuaded me, and I was not very old. I have always felt so sure that you would come back to me at last. You must have heard that I have never married, and known that it was for your sake. And you yourself have never married either! Love, oh, love, you must come back to me! If you could only know how I suffer every day, and how I weary for you, you would relent—you must! Come soon to me, or I give in. My strength, even now, is not what it used to be. I am growing weak; but I am still beautiful, they tell me. I am keeping myself beautiful for you; and if you would let me see you once, let me raise my eyes to yours after all these empty years of absence, it would be all right, I know. I would tell you that I was always yours from the beginning, and you would forgive me—and love me!"

The lady's-maid tapped at the door.

"You can't come in," said Miss Beaufort, with decision.

"If you please, Miss——"

"Wait a minute."

In that minute the precious relics were restored with care to their hidding-place, and the dressing-case was put in its usual position. When the maid entered, her mistress was standing before the dressing-table, leisurely unclasping a bracelet.

"I will wear my new myrtle-green brocke to go to the station this afternoon, Wilkins."

* * * * * * *

The 4.10 express from Windsor steamed into the great terminus, and Lisle Beaufort, as he rose to open the carriage-door, caught sight of a figure moving slowly down the platform, with that languourous grace which Cora could affect when she chose. He turned to his travelling companion.

"Here is my sister herself come to meet me! She'll be delighted to see you, old man! Come along!"

Lisle was a good-looking fellow, a couple of years older than his sister. He sprang out upon the platform rather impetuously, and hastened towards Cora, followed more leisurely by his companion.

"My dear girl, how good of you to come and meet me!"

"Ah, I felt that I must be first! You don't know how glad I am to see you!"

"You're a little brick! How's the *mater?* I met an old friend the other day, and we have travelled up together. You remember—oh, Cora?"

"Mr. Fitzwarrene! I am very glad to see you! Do you come from Warrendale?"

"Not quite direct. I have been two nights at Windsor, visiting a friend. I met your brother out at dinner last night, and we agreed to come up together. I hope Mrs. Beaufort is quite well?" said Hector politely.

"Mamma is about the same, thank you—which means, not very well and not very ill. She is rather worse than usual when she contemplates the awful fact that we are ten days into August and still in London, and rather better than usual at the prospect of seeing Lisle."

"He's looking remarkably well, isn't he?" said Hector. "I should think the very sight of such robust health would comfort Mrs. Beaufort."

"I can't say the same of you," said Cora playfully. "What have you done to yourself, Mr. Fitzwarrene? You look positively down in the dumps. Do they bore you at Warrendale?"

"No, thanks, not much—not nearly so much as I expected they would. I suppose they start with the exceptionally correct theory that no course of training can make me develope into a second Hugo; and, as I can't be that, they don't much care what I am."

"How thankful you must be for that! There's nothing so awful as to be expected to tread in the footsteps of a departed phenomenon, is there?" questioned Cora, with deep sympathy. "And is the neighborhood nice—and the people?"

"The neighborhood is very much like other neighborhoods, Miss Beaufort—at least, what I saw of it was. I shall be better able to tell you what its worth from my point of view when I go down for the First."

"Ah, exactly! You never had a single shot there in poor, dear Hugo's time, had you?"

"Poor, dear Hugo had such an unconscionable number of friends of his own wanting to shoot over the land that there wasn't room for the poverty-stricken cousin—who will always remember with pleasure and gratitude, that, in his most brilliant days, he was made welcome at a certain house in Park Lane."

Cora laughed and looked pleased.

"The inhabitants of said house would be delighted if you would come and dine with them to-morrow! I have committed a frightful breach of decorum by taking places at the theatre in August. Mamma is horrified; but I did so want Lisle to see 'The King's Own' before we leave town, which I suppose we shall do now in a few days."

"You're very good. If Mrs. Beaufort won't think me a nuisance——"

"Oh, she will have nothing to do with it! To let you into a secret, I want you for my own delectation. Mamma is sure to monopolise Lisle all the time, and I thought that if you came——"

"I might be permitted, for this once, the *elite* being all out of town, to monopolise Miss Beaufort!" said Hector, smiling.

"Exactly! How quick-witted you are! You see the point at once. But seriously, mamma will be delighted to see you. There's a spare seat in the box; and you must be wretchedly dull without a soul in town to speak to; so do come! A quarter to seven."

"Theophile has the luggage all right," remarked Lisle, rejoining them. "Cora, can't you persuade Fitzwarrene to come and dine with us one day soon?"

"He is coming to-morrow, and going to see 'The King's Own' with us," answered Cora. "Good-bye, Mr. Fitzwarrene! Reflect seriously upon the importance of the duties before you."

"Indeed I shall. I must buy up all the available books on the art of repartee. Not, of course, to be used aggressively, but merely as a means of self-defence."

He raised his hat, and the brother and sister drove off laughing; but the smile soon vanished from Lisle's lips.

"Did you ever see a fellow so altered as Fitzwarrene?" he asked.

"No, indeed! What in the world has he done to himself?"

"I'll tell you all I know about it presently—there isn't time just now. I want to know how mother is—how it comes about that you're in town just now—how you have been behaving lately—and fifty other 'hows', all at once?"

"You are immoderate. Now, all I want to know is summed up in one 'how'; but that is a tremendous one! How—oh, how is the fair Alice?"

Lisle blushed becomingly and smiled as he took a letter-case from the breast-pocket of his coat.

"She's very well indeed," he replied, "and prettier than ever. Here's the last in photos. of her. It really almost does her justice. That's the dress she wore at the lawn-tennis party at Gainbridge."

"She is very pretty," said Cora, studying her arch features—"very pretty indeed, Lisle; almost good enough even for you, old man! And she looks so happy, too!"

"I think she is—I hope and trust so," said Lisle simply.

"She ought to be!" added his sister vehemently. "Oh, she is very pretty, Lisle—far prettier than I!"

"Hers is such a very different style," said Alice's lover, pondering. "Rather small, you know—and light; but such a seat on horseback, Cora! You should see her take a fence!"

"Quite happy!" brooded Cora, still scanning Alice's face. "I wonder you're not afraid, Lisle! Do you know what I mean, eh?"

"Yes, I know. It does seem a cool thing to ask any woman to accept as her entire world the love of a fellow like me. Yet I suppose no man, if you asked him the question straight out, would be willing to sit down contented with less devotion than that."

"I suppose not," said Cora slowly.

Neither brother nor sister spoke again till the carriage stopped, and Lisle was welcomed by his mother herself, who actually stood waiting in the hall to greet him.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN, some two hours later, Lisle came down, he found the drawing-room in semi-darkness. The blinds, which had been down all day because of the heat, had not been raised, and the sultry August air just stirred them. The roar of distant traffic came through the windows; the air of the room was sweet and heavy with the scent of roses.

In one of the window-recesses sat Cora, on a very low chair, the fading daylight just touching the coils of her perfectly-arranged hair. She wore a dress of Indian-looking red silk, and ornaments of oriental silver.

Her chin rested in her hands, her elbows were on her knees, and there was a look of wistful coldness in her dark eyes.

Lisle sauntered across the room, and sat down on a chair by her side.

"You and Alice must know each other," he said. "They mean to invite you to Gainbridge as they return from the Highlands."

"I shall love to know her. I don't think I shall even be jealous of her, Lisle. And I used to think I should hate your wife!"

"That was kind!" said Lisle, laughing.

"It was because I loved you so," she said; and her voice, when she lowered it thus, was irresistible. "I never loved more than three people, Lisle; and you are one!"

"Ah, that reminds me," he said eagerly—"talking of people whom you loved! I have a most astonishing piece of news for you, Cora."

"News for me! What is it?"

"You would never guess. Lord Eynesford is in England—at Grange-le-Cross! Isn't that the last thing you expected to hear?"

There was not even a rustle of her draperies to betray the stormy rush of excitement which surged up in Cora's heart.

"Lord Eynesford — in England — at Grange-le-Cross!" she repeated, in subdued tones. "Are you sure, Lisle?"

"Certain!"

"Who told you? You have not seen him?"

"No; but Fitzwarrene has—he told me."

"Where did Mr. Fitzwarrene see him?" she asked, after a short silence.

"At Grange-le-Cross—Warrendale is close by, you know."

"How long has he been in England?"

"Nearly three months."

"He must have passed through London then?"

"Yes; I wonder you didn't see him."

Cora twisted her slender fingers together till she winced with the pain.

"He has evidently forgotten the way to Park Lane," she said, with a little nervous laugh.

"He has apparently forgotten most things that he ought to have remembered," said Lisle, with severity. "A little consideration for, a slight remembrance even, of the woman who was to have married his only brother, would not have been unbecoming. I don't want to be unjust; but I never did like Ranulf!"

She knew there was something more to come. She braced herself to bear it, whatever it might be. She felt cold, hard, as if she were being turned to stone. The blindest vanity, she told herself, could not imagine that a man could be nearly three months in England, and never come near the woman he loved.

There was a reason for his arrival! Had he not vowed never again to appear among his equals until he had cleared from his home the shadow of suspicion cast upon it by his father?

"What has he been doing?" she asked, in a steady, quiet voice.

"Why, I confess it surprised me," Lisle replied. "For many reasons—though I never liked him—I thought he would be the last man to do such a thing. He is going to be married!"

Cora made no comment on this piece of news, and a long silence followed, during which Lisle's uppermost thoughts were concerning the dinner-gong. He did not know that upon the silent girl beside him the worst agony that a woman can endure had just fallen, and that his hand had dealt the blow.

The silence was at last broken by Cora.

"He is going to be married—to whom?"

"That is the worst part of it. If he were going to marry any one suitable, I shouldn't see any reason against it; but he is going to marry, the bailiff's daughter!"

"Your informant in this too is Mr. Fitzwarrene?"

"Yes, Fitzwarrene."

"He has been at Grange-le-Cross, and knows all about it?"

"Yes; there is great excitement in the neighborhood, he says. Of course they are people who are not visited. Eynesford seems to have been quite infatuated from the first—made himself most conspicuous with her at some *fete champetre* down there, and proposed immediately afterwards."

"It does sound unlike him," said Cora in calm incisive accents. "He must be very much altered since—I—knew him."

"Yes; and not for the better, from all Fitzwarrene says."

Cora rose from her chair, and, the twilight having deepened, she could allow a spasm of mortal pain to distort her features without fear of its being seen by her brother.

"When is he to be married?" she asked.

"Soon—directly, I believe."

"Mamma is late," said Cora in a strained voice. "I will go and see what keeps her."

Once outside the door, she bowed herself as if in bodily agony. Grasping the door-handle to keep herself from sinking, she passed, in a few minutes, through a purgatory of concentrated suffering.

"I never knew that I was a wicked woman," was her first conscious reflection; "but I know it now! There is no deed I would not do, there is no crime I would stop short of, to embitter his existence, to stab him through as he has stabbed me! I would give worlds to humble his pride—to see him, for whom I have meekly waited eight years, in the dust at my feet. And I will do it too! In some way, I will have my revenge, though in taking it I should mar my own life for ever!"

"Cora, is that you?" asked Mrs. Beaufort, rustling down the stairs.

"Yes, mamma," was the calm answer. "The gong has sounded. Lisle was getting impatient, and I came to look for you."

The next evening a party of four were seated in a box witnessing the performance of "The King's Own." Cora, looking superb in a dress of pale lemon yellow, with roses to match, sat rather in the background, with Fitzwarrene. Lisle and his mother were inveterate play-goers; they were absorbed in the acting; but Cora had seen the play before, and Fitzwarrene was in no mood to be amused. He was interested, though, in Cora's beauty, which to-night was fitfully radiant. She leaned back, slowly moving her great fan of yellow feathers to and fro; and, above it, her large black eyes looked deeper and stormier than ever. She had watched him for some time in silence, and presently she spoke in a very low murmuring voice.

"I wish you would tell me what has happened to you," she said.

He started violently.

"Miss Beaufort, I assure you——"

"You needn't assure me; I know it already."

"What do you imagine can have happened to me?" he asked confusedly.

"I know by a fellow-feeling—a feeling of sympathy. I am a great judge of character, you know, and I always liked you. So I have been watching you attentively, and I have found out the nature of your trouble. Some one has wronged you!"

His eyes had been fixed upon a diamond pendant which rose and fell on her neck; but now he raised them, startled and eager, to meet hers.

"You—found out—that?"

"Yes. Am I right?"

"Yes; you are," he replied moodily.

"But it is not a woman who has wronged you. You have not, in the conventional sense of the term, been 'jilted.' It is a man who has done it—is it not?"

"It is a man."

"I knew it. Listen—I too have been wronged—insulted! I am not a saint, any more than you are, Hector Fitzwarrene. I want"—her tones were clear and steady, though she spoke hardly above a whisper—"I want revenge!"

"You do?" he said, not comprehending, but held captive by the power of her eyes.

"I want revenge," she repeated—"and you can sympathize with me, can you not?"

"I can—I do!"

"I have waited a very long time for my revenge," she said.

The orchestra began to play softly, and Hector heard the words as if in a dream.

"And now," she continued, "I want you to help me to take it—will you? Don't answer yet; wait a moment while I tell you something. You know—every one knows—that I was engaged to be married to Lord Glanvil. Every one knows, too, the awful mystery which surrounded his death. It was then—at that time—by the hand of his brother—that I suffered this wrong. At a time when suspicion fell upon all, perhaps you will say it was not strange that his hand pointed at me. But I will never forgive it! The man I hate is the Earl of Eynesford! Will you help me to be revenged upon him?"

Fitzwarrene's hand sought hers, and held it in a passionate, feverish clasp.

"I will help you to the death—I will go any length—I will be your ally, willing to exert every power I possess," he said, through clenched teeth.

"Do you know," observed Mrs. Beaufort, putting up her gold eye-glasses, "I wish you two wouldn't talk so much while the play is going on. I can't hear if you chatter so."

CHAPTER IX.

IT was a cold September night, and the salt air blew keenly in Ethel Devon's face as she sat on the deck of the "Boulogne" steamer, her hands linked together, her eyes fixed in the direction where the white cliffs of England had disappeared. It was such a breezy night that most of the passengers had gone below; but Ethel, under the chaperonage of a rigid elderly spinster, who seemed positively to enjoy the buffeting of the wind, remained on deck, where at least she could have silence and comparative solitude, and be free to indulge in her own sad and bitter meditations.

"Now," she thought, "I feel as if I were dead, and going to attend my own funeral! I wonder if I can really be the same Ethel who stood ready dressed for the *fete*, and cried out to her mother, 'Oh, how happy—how happy I am!'?"

The day after her miserable interview with Lord Eynesford, he had called at Brook Lodge, and she had persistently refused to see him, alleging as a reason that she was not well, which was true enough.

None of her family knew where she had been the day before, nor did any of them understand the full horror and repugnance which she felt for Lord Eynesford. Before her mother and father the girl controlled herself with a strength of will little short of marvellous. Though never pretending to feelings which she had not, she yet accepted the situation quietly, and bore references to her change of position from her father without wincing.

It supported and upheld her to see the wonderful way in which he seemed to come back to life when once he was assured that his dishonorable conduct would be hidden from the world. The ashen color of his face, the wild look in the eyes, the quivering of the lips, and the trembling of the hands all disappeared by degrees. When he took his youngest daughter's hand in his, told her how he loved her, and whispered that, from the first moment of seeing her beautiful face, he had known she would help him if she could, but that not even in his wildest flights of imagination had he ever thought that she would be a countess, the poor child tried to think that this was her reward.

It was only when, with smiles and feeble nods, the sick man would ask her how earls made love, or whether "my lord" was not as eager in his courting as any plain "Mister" could be, that Ethel would feign some excuse to slip away, gain her room, lock herself in, and indulge in a long paroxysm of weeping.

It was mostly on her mother's account however that she had remained firm.

When Mrs. Devon came to her with a hunted look in her eyes and parted white lips, just feebly moaning in the first shock of knowing her husband's unworthiness—when the girl realized what a life-long disappointment her mother's marriage had been—when she realized that, by her own act, she could avert the blow and give ease to the aching heart—it had seemed almost easy to make the sacrifice.

And now, having controlled herself so far, she would not spoil the effect of all she had done and suffered by letting this poor, weak, disillusioned, refined heart know that her trial was almost greater than she could bear.

The tears of relief shed by her mother in her arms, the "Bless you—bless you, my darling; you have saved my life!" had been her only comfort.

Ethel could not, however, bring herself to see Lord Eynesford so soon after the desperate appeal she had made to him in vain. She sent her mother to plead her ill-health, and the Earl took his denial more quietly than might have been expected.

He had come, he said, to arrange about the wedding. He thought it might be better, on many grounds, for it not to take place at Grange-le-Cross. He should not wish it, and he did not think Miss Ethel would wish it either.

He had a suggestion to make which astonished and somewhat affronted Mrs. Devon. It was that the wedding should take place in the south of France, at St. Etienne, his estate there. If Mrs. Devon thought this arrangement would meet with her daughter's approval, he would go at once to France and give the necessary orders. Mrs. Devon, as soon as her husband was well enough to be left, would accompany her daughter to Paris; there he would meet them and escort them to St. Etienne, where the wedding should take place quietly at the little English church built by the late Lord Eynesford. There was an express stipulation that Mrs. Devon should depart on her return journey as soon as the ceremony was over.

Dreams of a grand wedding in the parish church, of numerous bridesmaids, a bishop to perform the ceremony, and the whole county present to witness it, had been floating through Mrs. Devon's mind.

The Earl's suggestion did not suit her at all; but, to her supreme astonishment, Ethel seemed quite content at the idea.

The one aspect, however, in which the plan presented itself to the girl's tortured mind was, that it would necessitate the Earl's absence from England at once. Her eagerness to obtain temporary relief was such as to make her indifferent to anything else.

"Yes; tell him it will do," she answered quietly; "and you and I can be ready to start in ten days or a fortnight—can't we, dear?"

"My child," said her mother aghast—"your clothes!"

"Oh, there will be no need for fine clothes if I am to be married quietly! It is a great relief," answered Ethel. "You know, mother dear, the shock of it all—of father's illness, and the probable disgrace—is so fresh still I seem not able to get over it—to take any interest in anything. You may get what you like; but you must not tease me about clothes."

She paused a moment, and then added, with an effort:

"Lord Eynesford understands; he knows how I feel. That is the reason he proposed this plan. It is very thoughtful of him, mother. You must let him know you think so."

Mrs. Devon was completely bewildered. She would have liked to argue the subject with one or both of the refractory pair; but Ethel turned her pillow over and laid down her head with a weary look of pain.

"I can't talk any more. Don't keep him waiting, dear mamma."

Thus it came about that Mrs. Devon and her daughter were on the Boulogne boat. Mrs. Devon had never been abroad before, and was entirely in her daughter's hands.

It was a good thing for Ethel to have something to do, and she forgot her trouble for a time in dealing with custom-house officials, seeing after luggage, and finding a carriage to drive them to a hotel.

It was gray dawn when they arrived, and the air felt cold and raw. To Ethel it was like the dawn of the new, strange life she had begun.

They had several hours of rest before starting for the train, and it was just dusk when they reached Paris. Mrs. Devon, still very tired with the bustle and strange aspect of everything around her, had slept in her corner of the car all the latter part of the journey.

Ethel had been quiet and apathetic. She thought that, for her, the struggle was over. It had ended when, a week before, Fitzwarrene, breaking all bounds, had met her in the garden of her father's house, and tried to persuade her to cut the knot of her difficulties by running away and marrying him.

No one would ever know what that victory had cost her. On the one hand, freedom with the man she loved; on the other, a slavery from which her whole woman's soul revolted. But the steadfast courage, which was a part of her nature, stood her in good stead.

She had conquered: but, in doing so, had received a wound which she believed to be mortal. She was sensible of loss of appetite, loss of the keener emotions of pleasure or pain. She had little strength, was soon fatigued, grew thin, and slept badly; but, with a dreary sort of pleasure, she hoped that these symptoms were the beginning of the end.

As the train came to a standstill in the Paris railway-station, she recognized the tall, wiry figure, the dark, thin face, and the heavy black moustache of the Earl, who was eagerly scanning the car-windows. With icy calmness she turned to her mother, and said:

"Wake up, mamma; we are in Paris!"

The next moment the Earl was at the car-door, and stood with extended hand.

"You have kept your promise," he said.

"I have kept it," answered Ethel, ignoring the hand, and turning to lift her bag and rug from the interior of the car.

"Let me take those," he said, not noticing the slight. "How do you do, Mrs. Devon? I am afraid the journey has been very long and wearisome for you. The hotel is close by. You must rest and have something to eat."

Mrs. Devon was profuse in her protestations. She was not in the least tired—the journey was nothing at all—it was so very good of the Earl to meet them! So they all placed themselves *en flacre*, and were driven to the hotel Lord Eynesford had chosen.

The bailiff's wife seemed to have revived wonderfully. She bustled about, was loud in praise of the handsome bed-room assigned to her, unpacked with energy, and proceeded to make an elaborate toilet for dinner.

"Come, Ethel," she said, "get your things, dear! What will you wear—this painted muslin?"

Ethel had seated herself in an arm-chair, and was gazing helplessly at the open trunks.

"Must I put on another dress?" she said.

"My dear—dine with an earl in that dress you have been travelling in!" said Mrs. Devon, in such an injured tone that Ethel rose hastily and made a toilet as best she could.

"There!" said her mother, as the girl again subsided into the big chair, looking whiter than ever in the pale gown she had donned. "I shall not be ready for another quarter of an hour; I'm not so young as you are, Ethel. Just go into the next room and talk to Lord Eynesford, there's a dear!"

"I am too tired to move, mamma. I am so thankful to have a few minutes' rest."

"My child! Have some *sal volatile*!"

"No, thank you, mamma; it is rest I want."

The toilet which was to have taken Mrs. Devon fifteen minutes, was accomplished in five, and she hastened into the sitting-room, where the Earl stood before the fire.

"How pleasant a fire is these sharp autumn evenings!" said Mrs. Devon, taking the luxurious chair he placed in front of it for her.

"I am glad you think so. I am afraid Miss Ethel is over tired. You should have stayed a day at Boulogne."

"Oh, I assure you, she is very well—she will be all right directly! The young always recover quickly from any fatigue."

As she spoke, Ethel entered the room. Lord Eynesford placed a chair for her, which she feigned not to see. She took another and sat down.

His face darkened for a moment as she did so; but the next instant the expression changed to one of anxiety, the alteration in the girl's looks was so marked. Even her mother did not fail to notice the expression of heart-broken surrender on her face.

"Ethel, my darling," she said, "you can't be well!"

The girl started visibly. It was as if her mother's voice recalled to her mind the part she must play.

"I believe I am more tired than I imagined," she said; "it is very foolish of me; I wonder at myself! It is not such an awful thing—a journey from London to Paris—is it?"

She addressed the Earl, but did not suffer her glance to rest on his face.

At this moment the folding-doors were opened, disclosing a brilliantly-lighted little dining-table.

"Dinner is served," said a solemn waiter; and they sat down to dine.

In Ethel's *serviette* was an exquisite little bouquet of Neapolitan violets, which scented the whole room. She sat down and unfolded the napkin as though she had not seen the flowers, and they fell to the floor, unnoticed by Mrs. Devon. The Earl betrayed his annoyance neither by word nor sign. Ethel began to talk about the custom-house officials and incidents of the journey, and continued to do so half through the dinner—scarcely more than tasting food. During a pause in this strained conversation, Lord Eynesford stooped and picked up the flowers.

"Do you dislike the smell of violets?" he asked.

"I dislike the smell of those," was the frigid reply.

He tossed them into a plate which the waiter was just then removing, and they were carried away.

"I do not know," said the Earl, addressing Mrs. Devon, "whether you will like what I have done. I have made arrangements to stop in Paris to-morrow, as I thought you would like to see the Louvre, and so on."

Mrs. Devon, as he expected, was delighted, and insisted on a description of all the chief sights of Paris, that she might judge which she preferred.

It seemed to Ethel as if that meal would never end, as if ages elapsed before she could rise and say:

"I am very tired, mother; I think I will go to bed."

"By all means, darling! Shall I come and see if I can do anything for you?"

"No, thank you, mamma. We must not condemn his lordship to a solitary evening," replied Ethel, unable to repress a satirical smile. "Good night!"—kissing her mother's cheek. "Good night!" she added, with a slight bow to Eynesford.

He held opened the folding-door for her to pass, then swiftly followed her and closed it after him. They were alone together, with only the fire to light the room.

She moved away, with a faint cry of terror.

"Wait a moment," he said in low tones; "I am not going to remonstrate with you—only to suggest a measure of prudence."

"Well, what is it? Quickly, please!"

"I want you to wear this ring—not, you must understand, in any way for my sake, but in order that your mother may imagine things are all right between us."

"I will not wear a ring for one instant, until—until I am obliged!"

"What difference can it make, two days sooner?"

"I will not do it; it is not in the bond. You exact from me the letter of my promise to the full. I shall take care you have only the letter, the bare letter, I"

"You are short-sighted!" he said, knitting his brows.

"I don't understand you."

"If you were prudent you would reflect that the more uncivil you are to me before marriage——"

"The more likely you will be to ill-use me afterwards!" It is the first thought likely to occur to any one who knows your disposition. I have considered the question carefully. The worse you treat me, the sooner I shall escape from you and your ill-usage."

"That is not a cheerful view of the case," he said gravely; "but it does not touch my argument about the ring. You are sacrificing yourself for your mother's sake; let her imagine you a voluntary Iphigenia. I contend that this ring is in the letter of the bond. Every one who is engaged wears one."

She held out her hand.

"Give it to me. I would rather wear it than prolong this discussion."

"I applaud your common sense," he answered, and took one step towards her.

In an instant she was at the door, grasping the handle.

"Not twice—no!" she said fiercely. "I am on my guard now!"

The Earl turned round, walked to the table, took a tray, and placed a little case upon it; then, approaching, held it to her at arm's length.

"It is in the bond that you wear it," he said.

She took it, opened the door, and disappeared without a word.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

JUSTICE is the idea of God, the ideal of man, the rule of conduct writ in the nature of mankind.

Bric-a-Brac.

LOOKING BACK.—It is said to be a serious ill-omen to look or turn back after setting out on a journey, a superstition, in all probability, as old nearly as the world itself. This originated with Lot's wife looking back, when he and his family were being led outside the doomed City of the Plain.

MOTHERS-IN-LAW.—In the islands of New Britain a man must not speak to his mother-in-law. Not only is speech forbidden to this relative, but she must be avoided; and, if by chance the lady is met, the son-in-law must hide himself or cover his face. Suicide of both parties is the outcome if the rule is broken.

WHAT ARE "BLUE BOOKS?"—Those of you who read newspapers will sometimes find reference made to "blue books," and may have been puzzled to know what was meant. The term is applied to all papers, reports, documents and the like printed for government and laid before the Houses of Parliament in England, and they are called "blue" because they are stitched up (or bound) in dark blue paper covers. In this country it refers to a blue-bound book containing the names of persons in the government's employ. In Germany and Portugal they would talk of "white books," in France of "yellow," in Italy of "green," and in Spain of "red."

LOVERS' SIGNS.—The young people in Tahiti have a custom of conversing with flowers, not unlike the Orientals. If a coolness has sprung up between a young pair, the female will separate a flower partially down the centre. One half of the split flower is intended to represent the man, and the other half the woman; and it is meant typically to imply that, though separate bodies, they are joined together at the heart. If the lover puts the flower in his hair, it is a sign that he wishes to preserve her favor; but, if he tears it asunder, it is a token that he has lost his regard for her, and wishes to be entirely separated.

THE BRIDESMAIN.—In Germany, the duties of the bridesmaid have just a tinge of superstition about them. It is one of their duties on the morning of the marriage day to carry to the bride a myrtle wreath, for which they had subscribed on the previous evening. This they place on her head, and at night remove it, when it is placed in the bride's hand, she being at the time blindfolded. The bridesmaids then dance around her, while she endeavors to place the wreath on one of their heads. Whoever is fortunate enough to be thus decorated will, it is believed, be herself a wife before another year has passed away. In removing the bridal wreath and veil, the bridesmaids are careful to throw away every pin, or the bride will be overtaken by misfortune; while any unwary bridesmaid who retains one of these useful little articles, will materially lessen her chances of "getting off."

HUNTING WATER.—If when upon a long hunt or journey in Africa the Kaffir be unable for a long time to find water, he sometimes avails himself of the instinct of one of those animals which he frequently keeps in a domesticated state—the baboon, or chacma. The baboon takes the lead of the party, being attached to a long rope and allowed to run about as it likes. When it comes to a root of babiana, it is held back until the precious vegetable can be taken entire out of the ground, but in order to stimulate the animal to further exertions it is allowed to eat a root now and then. The search for water is conducted in a similar manner. The wretched baboon is intentionally kept without drink until it is half mad with thirst and is then led by a cord as before mentioned. By what signs that animal is guided no one can even conjecture, but if water is in the neighborhood the baboon is sure to find it.

COUNTING.—The Chiquitos of South America, a very low Indian tribe, couldn't formerly count beyond one; for any larger sum than that, their simple language used terms of comparison alone—as many as one's eyes, as many as a crow's toes, as many as the fingers on one hand, and so forth up to six or seven. The Tasmanians could get as far as two; beyond that, they stopped short; their simple scheme of numeration was merely this: one, two, a great many. The Australian black-fellows in Queensland go a step further. They reckon thus: "One, two, two-one (3), two-two (4)!" and after that, they say, "more than four," meaning thereby an indefinite number. One South African tribe easily beats this rudimentary record, and knows how to count up to ten. But eleven, or both hands and one over, it regards as the *ne plus ultra* of human computation.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

BY HARRIET KENDALL.

The Spring-time came with laughter on its mouth,
And kissed, unchided, every baby flower;
Pale snowdrops faintly smiled upon the hour,
One sweet, short April-time. O sweet, sad fate
To blossom like white lilies of the South,
Soft lilies in white growth without a mate.

The summer came, through woodbine-trellised ways,
Crowned with magnolia—Eden's fairest flower;
The generous sun-warmth kindled every hour,
Till life seemed full of glad things everywhere:
Seemed flushed with rich fulfilment of its days,
Seemed but a thing of joy and sunshine there.

The Autumn came with grave, imperial grace,
When Summer's love had loved itself away.
The full, round, radiant beauty of the day
Was saddened by an amethystine shade;
A lovely seriousness was on its face,
As in the gold-leaved paths the sad winds prayed.

And when the Winter came, I thought to hate
The dull, unblossomed hours: but in home ways
I learnt that love has many April days
And rose-tipped hopes, when earth looks gloomiest.
God seemed to smile when I had learned to wait
With love's great faith close to my being prest.

IN SEVERED PATHS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "WITH THIS RING I WED THEE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FAR away at sea a great ship lay becalmed, her mainsails furled, for it was idle to set them when not a breath stirred the air, not a cloud crossed the sky. It was blue as sapphire, and the sun blazed down upon a waste of sea bluer still, upon whose unchanging surface there ran no ripple larger than a lady's finger; though a long, wide, heaving swell moved the mass of waters, as though some great storm, dying leagues away, spent here its last majestic strength.

Round about in the clear distance lay a little fleet of ships standing motionless as on a glassy ocean, and silent as though all life within them had fainted into death in the cruel sun.

These were merchant-ships bound for India, which the great frigate and the sloop of war a mile ahead were convoying safely on their way—a hateful task to men thirsting for battle, who deemed that every day's sail bore them farther from the enemy whose cannon they longed to face.

In the quiet stifling monotony of the present calm even a funeral had some excitement in it for weary men; and, as a silent procession moved to the gangway, those who took no part in it looked on with interest, and stood uncovered, and listened reverently to the solemn words that rang out into the clear still air; then for an instant the voice ceased, and on the silence there broke a sound that quivered on the heart; and all men knew the dead had gone down to his grave in the sea.

Below, on the middle deck, a sick man, sleeping, moved uneasily in his hammock; and with eyes still closed he clutched at a kind hand touching his, as though seized with a spasm of terror or pain.

Then, awakening suddenly with a start, he gazed wildly into the face bending over him.

"Who shrieked?" he cried. "What lady is come aboard? Daniel, as I live, I swear I heard Estrild's voice!"

"Dear lad, you are wandering still," said Daniel soothingly. "The sound you heard was the body of that wisht creatur Trevel dropping into the sea. I am glad he is gone; he did but torment you with his half-told confessions, which I reckon were mostly lies."

"Ah, Daniel—and his secret is gone down into the sea with him."

"No, no, not all of it. You remember, as we leaned over him, and caught his last breath, he lifted his hand feebly and said, 'An accident, as I hope for mercy, only an accident.' There, dear lad, those were his dying words: you must be content with them, you must seek to know no more."

"Then, Daniel, I may as well give up life. The woman I love has forsaken me because of this maddening mystery, and unless I clear it up I shall see her face no more."

"What's a maiden's word?" returned Daniel. "By this time, now her grief is spent a bit, she is repenting, and her heart is calling out for you every hour of the day."

"Do you think so?" Harold asked, with a feeble hope. "I fear there is no relenting in a resolve so fixed as hers; she is bound by a promise, Daniel, to the dead."

"And by a promise to the living too," said Daniel cheerfully. "Bless my heart, my son, are you nobody, that you think she can send you away out of her life like a straw floating on the wind?"

"Not so lightly as that, Daniel; I have faith in her love still. Now why did she come to Trevel's funeral?" he asked; and his voice shook with sudden fear again.

"You are reading [wandering] a bit, my son;" and Daniel passed his cool hand soothingly over the sick man's brow. "I reckon it ain't possible in natur' for a lady to walk over a thousand miles of sea, and then vanish like a breath; not but what I'm ready enough to own there's things in the airth that we can't measure with a six-fathom line o' rope. So maybe she have come to 'ee in a dream like, just to bring 'ee a croomb of comfort."

"A dream?" repeated Harold. "Well, it might be; but it was vivid as reality. I saw her plainly, Daniel, except her right hand, that was hidden as a cloud; on her left she still wore my ring."

Daniel was silent; his face was grave, and he strove to hide it from his friend.

"I know what you are thinking of," Harold said presently. "But she is not dead, Daniel, it was no ghost I saw."

"Well, sonny boy, that's cheering," resumed Daniel, treating Harold in his weakness as if he were a child. "Now you can sleep and dream of her again if you will."

"No; I want to talk. I must tell you of something I have on my mind. Daniel, when I saw her in my dream, I knew she thought I was dead, and it was my body she saw launched into the deep. I struggled, I fought as against a legion to tell her I was living; but at the instant Trevel's corpse struck the water she shrieked, and darkness fell between me and her, and she was gone."

"Well, I don't say as the dream edn't queer; but in falver dreams are uncommon cur'ous at times. And you know you fell asleep with whisht thoughts of Trevel in your mind, having heerd he was to be buried this mornin'."

Harold did not contradict this, but the painful look of anxiety on his face did not pass away through Daniel's arguments.

"I cannot understand the conviction I have," he said uneasily; "but I know and feel she believes me dead. Who can tell what will happen if her belief is strengthened in some strange way unknown to us? She is in bad hands, Daniel."

"Well, yes," said Daniel unwillingly; "Mr. Vicat is a poor Christian, I do fear; but his wife is a good lady."

"There is no help in her, Daniel; my poor darling would appeal to her in vain."

Daniel was silent; he searched about in his big heart for words of consolation, but could find none.

It was filled with an infinite pity for the poor brave boy, as he called Harold, who had been so ruthlessly seized and driven into fever, and was now being dragged across the ocean, leaving his love ignorant of his fate.

Daniel's compassion rose often in his throat, choking back speech, so Harold was used to his silence.

It was enough for him that he was there by his side, ready to help and cheer when needful.

A little time went by, and then a slight rustle broke the stillness, it was as though the ship had quivered as an aspen-tree does when its pale leaves feel the coming wind.

"Here's the breeze at last!" cried Daniel joyously. "Now this will drive away dreams and falver, and you'll be on your legs again soon, like a man."

"Shall we touch anywhere soon? Will there be a chance to write?" asked Harold anxiously.

Before Daniel could answer, Joe thrust the sail aside which shielded the hospital from the rest of the deck, and displayed a face alight with excitement.

"The sloop is signaling to us to crowd all sail. The French fleet is ahead, and we shall have a fight. Lor, Mr. Oiver, how I do wish you was well enough to be in it! But, there, you shall have my share of the prize-money—I promise 'ee that."

The men did not laugh; to win a battle was a foregone conclusion always with a British sailor.

To be beaten by Frenchmen was one of the impossibilities of the sea which never entered into his calculation.

The prospect of a fight sets even sick veins tingling, and poor Harold started up in his hammock with a new strength to him.

"Daniel, if there is a battle, I'll not lie here to be shot like a dog in his kennel. I'll stand to a gun while there's life in me to hold up."

"Steady now!" said Daniel. "I reckon we are more likely to run than to fight. They merchantmen haven't no stomach for a battle; they're stuffed full of riches, which they're bound to save if they can. 'Tis poor men love the smell of powder, not the rich waunts."

"I shall be ashamed to show my face to hoam if we run afore Frenchees," said Joe, in indignation; "it ain't likely sich a thing will happen to we."

The great ship creaked and quivered as sail after sail was crowded on her masts, and now, as they caught the freshening breeze, she sprang forward like a thing of life; and the rush of her course through the waves was as the sound of a thousand horses dashing into battle.

Harold flung himself back on his pillow with his new strength gone, while a blank look of dismay settled itself on Joe's young face, and Daniel's looked grave and white.

"We be showing 'em a clean pair of heels, sure 'novgh," he said. "I reckon we're outnumbered — ten to waun perhaps."

"Go on deck, Daniel, I entreat you, and bring me back word," said Harold feverishly.

Daniel went, while Joe, looking after him, dashed his hand across his eyes to hide the tears of rage that had risen in them.

"Ten to waun!" he exclaimed. "Well, what if we be? 'Tis fair odds enough, considerin' we be English agin' French."

"You must count guns, Joe, not men," said Harold, with a faint smile. "French guns are as good as English ones."

"No, I'm darned if they be!" returned sturdily. "There's flesh and blood and grit behind our guns; and there's only skin and bone and fright behind theirs. Lor, what's that? Is it lightning?"

The heavy boom of a gun whose flash he had seen answered him; and now the boy flung up his hands in delight.

"I knowed we shouldn't run! Whoever heerd of a British ship running afore a French fleet? Now they'll catch it hot, I reckon, and we shall have frogs for breakfis'."

"Clear decks for action!" cried a stentorian voice.

The order rang through all ears like a trumpet, and was obeyed with a swiftness past words to tell.

The low fever that had settled on Harold's veins left him as by some magic touch of healing.

He sprang from his hammock, and dressed himself with hurried hands, and, in that superhuman strength that excitement lends, he stood by a gun, and worked like a giant.

Joe kept by him, handing powder till he was black, and even through the thunder of guns his shouts of delight and his quaint remarks brought a smile on the men's faces.

The French frigate that had fired the first gun now came to close action.

Right between her and the fleet of merchantmen she and her sister-ships had hoped to capture dashed the gallant little sloop.

Swinging round in the wind like a bird with wide white wings, she brought her guns to bear, and poured a raking fire upon her enemy.

The great French ship seemed to stagger beneath the blow, and her cannon answered wildly, their shots falling wide of the mark and dropping harmlessly into the sea.

In vain the four great French liners near by strove in the light wind to come to her aid.

Their huge unwieldy hulls showed bristling lines of fire which were but wasted on the waves, as the sails flapped on their tall masts or brought them slowly onwards, while the brisk sloop tacked and turned, and sent forth flame upon flame, followed by shots that fell with telling certainty.

The English frigate had dropped firing on her first enemy, leaving her to the sloop, while, slowly tacking, she sent a broadside against the ponderous ships bearing down upon her amid smoke and flame and the deafening roar of their great guns.

Suddenly in the midst of the din a cheer arose which shook the troubled air. The French frigate had lowered her flag to the sloop!

Was it true, or was it a good British shot that had brought it down, and would it be run up again to the mast-head by brave French hands?

While eyes peered anxiously through the smoke, and this question passed voiceless from heart to heart, a strange thing happened.

The four French line-of-battle ships, drawing ever nearer, ceased their fire suddenly, then tacked, turned, and fled. The disabled frigate hastened to follow, and the sloop, as though bewildered by what she saw, let her go silently away.

Gradually the smoke cleared and the sun shone down upon the battle-field of waters. Then was seen the reason for the French flight.

In the offing, standing out majestic against the sky, rode the English fleet, the great admiral's pennant streaming out from the foremast like a defiance to the world.

"It is Nelson's ship, the Victory!" and men shook hands with each other, and eyes blazed and shone between laughter and tears, and every heart beat high with the hope and joy of coming battle.

How calm, how quiet, how fearless the gallant ships looked, as with wide silent wings they bore down upon the retreating defences of France!

But from the first the pursuit was hopeless; the French ships had the wind with them now, and they flew like birds into the dim clouds.

Then a certain ship separated herself from the English fleet, and drew near to ask for details of the short sharp battle whose din and roar had drawn them hither.

On her deck was drawn up a red line of British soldiers, from whose ranks there burst a cheer as the two ships came within hailing distance.

Harold heard the cheer, but scarcely heeded it. He was in the cockpit, bending over poor Joe, who was badly wounded. All around lay the victims of war; pain was lord of the hour, blood was everywhere, and, amid cries and groans, the surgeon and assistant were doing roughly a gory work.

"Save me!" whispered Joe, clutching at Harold's arm. "They want to cut off my leg; but I'd sooner die than let 'em chop me to pieces as they are them other poor chaps."

"The Army doctor from the ship that has troops aboard is coming over to help us," said Daniel, in a low voice. "We'll keep those rough fellows from you, Joe, if we can, till he is here."

"This is not a pressing case," said Harold to the assistant-surgeon, who was but an apprentice. "It can wait."

"Very well," returned that incompetent young man, turning away gladly.

And so it happened that Joe's leg was saved; and the pale quiet surgeon who now dressed the wound looked up after the last bandage was on and stared earnestly into Harold's face.

"Good heavens, Oiver, what are you doing here?" he cried.

"Is it you, Pemberton?" exclaimed Harold, leaning against a bunk in utter exhaustion. "I am thankful to see some one who recognises me. I am supposed here to be a deserter from his Majesty's service; and, if I had not been struck down by fever, I should at this minute be in irons."

"Surely you are romancing!" returned the other, in amazement.

"We was all seized by a press gang—me and uncle and Mr. Oiver," broke in Joe; "and we was took aboard ship like thieves in handcuffs, and a scamp who's drownded now swore Mr. Oiver wasn't hisself, but a fellow called Bill Rough'un or some such outlandish name. That's how it was, sir, and I don't mind now, because I've seen a fight. Only uncle ought to have been put ashore at Falmouth; but the Captain he had sealed orders, and when he opened 'em he said he couldn't do it."

"And no harm done, my son, since I was glad to bide with Mr. Oiver when he was so bad with falver."

"I believe I should have gone overboard with Trevel but for you, Daniel," said Harold.

"You are fit only for hospital now," observed his friend Pemberton. "Come with me; I shall speak to the Captain at once."

When Harold, thin, pale, and ghastly from fatigue and wasting fever, appeared on the quarter-deck, attired still in Martin's sailor-clothes, there was a slight commotion; but his old friend Pemberton was by his side, and beside the first lieutenant of the ship stood his still older friend Colonel Pemberton.

And, when this gentleman, with a cry of recognition and surprise, rushed forward and grasped his hand, the drama was complete, and there was nothing further to be done but to treat the affair as a sort of blundering joke, and with somewhat awkward apologies restore the supposed deserter to his rightful position.

But this did not smooth down the annoyance felt on both sides, so that, when Colonel Pemberton proposed that Harold should come on board the troop-ship, it was hailed as a relief from a disagreeable dilemma.

The fleet of merchantmen was to be convoyed safely to the Cape, and here Daniel was assured of a free passage in some ship bound for England. Joe the Captain of the frigate would not part with, so Harold had to say good-bye to both his staunch friends.

"I would not leave you, Daniel," he said, "but for my resolve to accept the cadetship offered me, and go on to India."

"You are chasing a ghost, Mr. Oiver," returned Daniel. "It would be wiser to come home from the Cape with me."

"To what end, Daniel—still to find a new horror on Estrild's mind, destroying her happiness and my own—again to make myself a wanderer, with less chance of success than I have now?"

"Where's your chance, Mr. Oiver? Trevel's dead—you can't fish his secret up from the sea or hunt it down on the land."

"On Indian ground I hope to find it, Daniel. Reflect on what Trevel said when you were watching him?"

"The man was raving, sir; and mad words wouldn't hang a rat!"

"But he spoke of India," persisted Harold. "He kept crying out, 'I never touched the pistol! The hand that fired it is safe in India. Wrecked? No, no; water won't drown him nor fire burn him. He shall hang unless I get the money I want. Let me go, I say, that I may travel on to him that thinks he's dead, and let him know he's living!' Now, Daniel, have I correctly stated his words or not?" concluded Harold pleadingly.

"They are true as print," said Daniel, shaking his head sorrowfully; "but they don't prove nothing."

"They prove this," cried Harold eagerly—"that by some means unknown to us—all the crew of the *Alert* being dead, now Trevel is gone—Captain Armstrong succeeded in saving the assassin of Tristram Carbonelle. And that man is now in India and I go there to find him!"

"Well, Mr. Oiver, I can't stop you," said Daniel gravely; "but I want you to bear waun thing in mind. When Trevel's brain was clear, and his soul was leaving him—which I hope is saved—he unsaid all his mad words in that waun clear speech—'An accident, as I hope for mercy!' Mr. Oiver, you must put that down in your note-book 'long with the rest, and remember it when you lay your hand on that unfort'nate man, and forgive him!"

Harold's face flushed a little.

"That is impossible, Daniel. How can I forgive what ruins my life and blights a better and fairer life than mine? Let me place one point more before you—I was desperately ill, and you can answer it better than I can. Through all his ravings was not this fact clear—that Trevel was on his way to some near and rich relative of the fugitive assassin to sell to him his secret when you and I seized him?"

"It was clear, Mr. Oiver; I won't deny it. But a man like Trevel would as lief sell a lie for money as the truth. Now, Mr. Oiver, 'tis time to part; and may God bless you in your search, though 'tis wilder than chasing the Flying Dutchman!"

"Own one thing more, Daniel," cried Harold, grasping his hand nervously—"Captain Armstrong saved that man before his ship was wrecked?"

"Yes, sir; I reckon he did; and all our risks and dangers were run in vain. Well, we are here alive, and Michael have goet the *Curlew* hoam safe by now, so there's much to be thankful for. You'll send me news, sir, the first chance you have?"

"And let me hear from you too, Daniel, and tell me how poor little Joe gets on," said Harold, as he scratched an Indian address in his good friend's huge pocket-book.

A few more last words, a tender look on

Joe's sleeping face, and these two parted who had stood by each other through storm and danger and battle. Leaning over the bulwarks, Daniel watched the gig row away with Harold and his friends, and saw the big troop-ship receive them and cover them from his sight.

He waved his brown hands towards the filling sails, and went below with a shadow on his bronzed face and an unwonted tremor of his stout heart.

"It's a long cry to India. His eyes may never shine into my eyes again. And he's gone on the whitest errand a man can take upon himself. Whoever heerd of a ghost being hunted down, and laid hould of, and shook to pieces in the broad daylight—and in India too, among the blacks, where no Christian ghost would ever walk? No, no; the Langarth spirit will be laid at Langarth, or haunt the place for ever. Mr. Tristram died—as all his family die—in mystery. And what it means Mr. Oliver won't find out among heathens!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

IT was well perhaps 'or Harold that he was among friends now who knew all the history of his earliest, freshest years, and nothing of the circumstances of these later ones which had connected him with Langarth. So he had perforce to be silent over the mystery that tormented him, and give his spoon and his thoughts to other topics. This was good for him; and better still was the fact that he was no longer galled by the miseries and cruelties under which he had suffered through the brutalities of a press-gang, and no longer had his fevered nerves hosted by an insulting disbelief in all his statements as to his own identity.

"It is a curious experience for a man to be told he is not himself; and to be told it with the addition of jeers and insults and irons is more than sufficient to put him in a fever, without starvation and bad air being thrown in as helps," said his friend Doctor Pemberton. "But now, old fellow, you have got to spend your energies in getting well."

And this Harold did, regaining his health so rapidly that in a week or two all the time of fever and depression would have seemed to him like a dream—mixed as it was with delirium—but for the memory of Trevel's words and Trevel's death. This was with him always, and these recollections, were the dark wings which were bearing him to India.

On board the ship as passenger was Colonel Pemberton's brother, an East India director, and a man so high in office that he was able at once to bestow on Harold a commission in the Company's service.

He was glad to accept this for many reasons.

It would give him position, profession, and money, and all three would aid him in his plans.

It would be months before he could draw means from his own modest resources; and meanwhile he would be dependent on his friends—a position he could not brook.

So he accepted the career of a soldier as a necessity thrust upon him by the strange set of circumstance that had followed on his attempt to wring from Trevel the secret he had carried down with him into his fathomless grave.

Yet on the whole he felt he had acted wisely when, on shore for a day or two at the Cape, he posted his first long letter to Estrild, filled with a recital of much that had passed, and with entreaties not to be forgotten or forsaken in his enforced absence.

His own love was like a rock unshaken, and he would return to claim her and to release her from that sorrowful promise to her brother which had separated them for a time.

No letter is satisfactory, for hearts do not live and beat in ink, and all a lover's yearning, rushing with passion through his veins, could not warm the dead paper. So Harold thought his letter dumb and cold, and he posted it with a painful foreboding of sorrow.

At the Cape, too, Harold saw Daniel again for a few hours, and charged him with messages for Pleasance and presents for Estrild.

"Look here," said Daniel—"you don't mean this for Michael, do 'ee? I found it in the pocket of that unlucky jacket of his which have brought 'ee into this queer part of the world. They was a good suit of clothes, or I wouldn't have axed for 'em back; but this here gould pen oddn't his."

It was Mary Armstrong's pen, and Harold took it eagerly.

"I would not have lost it for treble its worth," he said. "This set me wondering, Daniel, if Miss Aarmstrong had news in the letter I brought her of that person's safety. Although she knew her father was dead, there was some strong elation about her which I could not understand. Find out if you can from the Coastguard if any relative of Captain Armstrong's was on board the Alert."

"There was no one of his name," returned Daniel—"I know that for sartain; but I can get a list of the crew that will tell who is missing and who is drowned."

"Daniel, you are my right hand!" exclaimed Harold. "It will be the best clue I have had yet. How is it I never thought of it before?"

"For the matter of that, neither did I. It is one of them simple things a man forgets while he is running after the hard ones."

This from Daniel as he wrung Harold's hand and hurried away to his waiting boat and the ship just spreading sails for England.

In India it was a time of war—a time of battle, confusion, and garments rolled in blood;" and, Harold's regiment being sent at once to the front; he found himself carried on by the red tide of glory into scenes of danger and excitement that for a while quenched the fevered desires of his heart, for "Nature is subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

Thus it happened that the strong chains of duty, of circumstance, and of cruel war held him fast through many a terrible month after his first arrival, till there fell down upon his quest a haze of dreaminess, a fear that he was hunting a phantom, and that life for him held nothing beyond the day's bloodshed, the night's march, the dull dreariness of camp and sickness, and the shouts and cries of battle. He seemed to have hoisted sail to all the winds which should transport him farthest from Estrild and that home of love which had been his youth's best dream.

And she was silent. No letter from far-off England reached him through these sultry months, when death was busy all around him in the "mingled war's battle" or in the close silent tent where men, with scarce a groan, lay down to die.

Once in a desperate engagement Harold saved the life of a young officer at the risk of his own and at the cost of a slight wound.

He was a young fellow whose reckless bravery had once or twice startled him—not with admiration, but with the strange suspicion that there was a touch of despair in it, and he was longing to rid himself of life.

Hitherto there had been little friendship or companionship between them, for they were not in the same regiment; but during the night after the sharp battle Harold sought him out in his tent, and found him with his head between his hands in black melancholy.

No welcome, no word of thanks greeted him; he simply looked up, and in silence pointed to a seat.

"I half feared you might be anxious about that scratch I got," Harold said, "so I have come to tell you it is no more than a scratch."

"I am glad it is no worse," returned the other, "though I daresay you are making too light of it. Oliver, you had no right to risk your existence for me; and, if you think I shall thank you for my life, you are mistaken."

"My dear fellow, do you suppose I came here for thanks? And I imagine I have as great a right as you to throw my life to those black dogs if I choose."

"I doubt that. With some it is a duty to live, with other a duty to die."

"Come, now, don't talk like the Sphinx of Egypt," said Harold, "unless you interpret at the same time."

"I mean that no doubt you have people to live for, while perhaps I may have people I wish to die for."

"Do you call that an interpretation?" asked Harold laughingly. "I expect, old fellow, you have more to live for than I have. Except a cousin who would bury me cheerfully"—Harold little knew how true his jesting words were—"I have not a relative in the world. And in India one's friends forget one," he added, with a slight change in his voice: "yet I think I still have one I would willingly die for!" and as he spoke his blood run warmly to his heart with thoughts of Estrild.

"Would you? Well, if I die, it will be for an enemy."

"That's more magnanimous," said Harold, in a jesting tone. "I confess I am not so generous as to throw away my life——"

He stopped suddenly, for his companion had risen in a hurried way, and, lifting the curtain of the tent, he stood now looking out upon the stilled and silent camp. In a moment he turned and held out his hand, as in a changed mood.

"I beg your pardon, Oliver, but I am sure you know how to make allowances for my gloomy temperament. You have seen that 'there is something rotten in the state of Denmark.'"

"I have not observed it. But can I help you?"—and Harold laid his hand kindly on the young man's shoulder.

"No one can help me. Oliver, we have not been thrown together much, but I feel there is a link between us, and you have often been lenient to my gloomy temper. I shall tell you the truth. I came out to India to die; I am resolved this shall finish!" He spoke fiercely, and dashed his hand across his forehead as though sweeping away some painful vision.

"What are you talking of? What shall finish?" said Harold, hiding his amazement in a soothing tone.

"My life, and all the misery of it. It is a horrible inheritance, and I have a right to fling it away."

"Cumberland, you are talking wildly! You are fevered by the horrors of the day! Go to rest, lad, and you will feel better."

"Rest?" he returned excitedly. "How can a man haunted as I am sleep?"

"Why should you be haunted?" returned Harold. "You have a clear conscience, and are neither brigand, pirate, nor assassin. I don't see why you should not sleep better than many of the old sinners in camp, whose slumbers might well be haunted by the ghosts of their many slain."

"You may jest at my words," said Cumberland gravely; "but have you never heard that it is possible to be haunted with the idea of murder—with the conviction that you are doomed one day to commit some ghastly crime?"

"Cumberland, I shall send Doctor Pemberton to see you. Your wits are wandering through excitement; that happens at times to men after a battle."

"I answer, like Hamlet, 'My blood discourses as healthy music as yours.' I am not mad, and yet I tell you I shall not escape my fate unless I die. And, Oliver, I mean to die. I will not live to carry a felon's conscience with me to my grave. There, leave me, I am not myself to-night! But for you I should be at rest!"

"So much for gratitude!" said Harold, striving to speak gaily. "Well, Cumberland, the next time I see you down, with a black villain ready to stick a knife into you, I promise you I will leave you alone."

"Keep your word," returned Cumberland gloomily, "and I'll thank you with my last breath."

Harold looked at the young fellow with a tender and anxious glance.

He was so young and slight, and there was a look upon his face that bespoke pity; it was a kind of shadow, a flitting expression of pain, that made many believe he was doomed to an early death.

"Cumberland, you have the battle still in your ears and brain. I shall send Pemberton to have a chat with you—not to doctor you, mind."

"He had better do neither," returned Cumberland, as they shook hands and said good night.

Doctors however were too busy to attend to unwounded men, so Harold had to forego his intentions till the morning, when he spoke of Cumberland's unnerved state.

"Unnerved!" repeated Doctor Pemberton, in amazement. "My dear fellow, Cumberland *has* nerves of iron! Why, he spent most of the night in the hospital tent, assisting me in some of the worst operations I have had since the war! Most gentle and untiring he was too in his attention to the wounded."

"I know he is as tender-hearted as a child," said Harold; "but he was very odd last night;" and Harold walked off to his duty, pondering the strange incongruity of Cumberland's character. "Apparently his nerves shattered to pieces, and angry that I had saved his life, and yet able to help coolly in—in that kind of work!" he said to himself, with a glance at the long white tent hiding ghastly things.

The next time he and Cumberland met there was a momentary awkwardness on the part of the latter, and his face flushed hotly; but he grasped Harold's hand, saying, with a nervous laugh—

"Richard is himself again! Upon my word, Oliver, I am ashamed of myself when I remember what a surly cur I was the other night! I woke up as soon as you were gone, and called myself over the coals in good strong language. Then, as a penance for my sins, I went to the hospital and saw—well, I saw how men cling to life through agony and horror, and so I came to the conclusion that life must be worth living. I am bad at a speech, and I can't fall on your neck or at your feet in Eastern fashion and offer you all my goods and declare that all my relatives, dead and living, are your slaves eternally, but I am thankful and you know it."

"My dear fellow, it appears to me you are making a tremendous speech. Come and cool your throat with a 'peg.' Ice has just arrived."

This last battle was the decisive one that finished the war and the campaign; the regiment went to Calcutta, and winter festivities began.

Young Cumberland rushed into them with the same ardor with which he had sought danger in battle.

A fevered restlessness seemed to run through his veins, impelling him to constant excitement.

Harold expostulated in vain, and warned him of all the hazards of sickness in a climate to which he was not accustomed. But he only laughed: he was as mad for pleasure as he had been for battle, and reckless nights followed reckless days in his wild career.

"I believe you are trying to kill yourself!" remarked Harold one day very angrily.

"Well, if I succeed," he returned, with his odd gay laugh, "I will make you my heir—that is if I outlive my father," he added; while suddenly there fell on his young face that shadow or look of pain which had first attracted Harold to him, since somehow it always brought Estrild to his mind as she looked on the terrible night of her brother's death.

It was not that there was any likeness between them; it was a mere flitting expression; and Harold had never spoken of it, being unwilling, in fact, to enter into details respecting his own life in his present state of mental uncertainty and pain, for not a line had reached him from Estrild since his landing in India.

To him therefore she seemed to have kept her vow of separation with implacable firmness.

"We all hope to outlive our fathers," he said, speaking, as he fancied, carelessly; but his thoughts gave to his tone an involuntary touch of sadness.

"Not all," rejoined Cumberland. "There are men who would welcome any death rather than outlive a father."

Harold began an answer with a jest on his exaggerated filial respect, but something in his friend's aspect stopped him. He changed the subject abruptly.

"Cumberland, I am in a bewildering state of uncertainty about affairs of my own. I am thinking of going home. I mean to ask for leave. There is no particular butchery going on at present, and, if there were, I feel that I should not much care to be in it—in fact, I should rather like not to kill anybody for a year or two. I am a peaceful man naturally."

"I don't believe you," said Cumberland tartly. "You enjoyed slaughtering that sneaky individual who was just about to save me the trouble of getting rid of my life through brandy-pawnee and balls—and a deuced slow way it is too!"

His tone was gay, his laugh rang out into the still air, and yet Harold felt that his words had a bitter taste in them and his young soul was sad even unto death.

"There is many a truth uttered in jest," he said to himself, as he wrung his friend's hand and left him.

For some days after this talk Harold was busy with his own affairs, and he saw little of Cumberland. His heart was sore with thoughts of Estrild; her long silence, their estrangement, all appeared to him bitter and incomprehensible. Ignorant of the letter that she had sent to him recalling him to her side, ignorant also of the events in London which had caused a belief in his death, he could but wonder painfully at her leaving his letter from the Cape unanswered; he could but urge from this fact that her resolve to make their parting final was unchanged, and a sort of bitterness took possession of his mind, mingled with jealousy and this pride of poverty, which whispered that he had no right to press his claim on the heiress of Langarth. There was a vague uneasiness too in all his thoughts—a fear that he had taken a wrong path in pursuing a myth and leaving Estrild so entirely in the power of an unscrupulous guardian.

In this breathing-space between war and war, when the heat of battle no longer ran hurriedly through his veins, such thoughts crowded swiftly on him, and the burning desire to return home grew on him like a fever. He resolved even to resign his commission rather than be thwarted. He thirsted for a sight of Estrild's face; a painful haste to see her pervaded every nerve; he felt like a man hurrying forward on an errand of life and death. The quest which had brought him to India was left far behind in his thoughts—in the excitement and din of war it had faded and grown dim, and he had not advanced a single step nearer a solution of the mistery since Trevel's body was dropped into the sea and the waves had covered his secret in their dark depths. So, when his request for leave was granted, his mind reverted to his search and all its adventures, risks, and disappointments with less bitterness than he would once have deemed possible.

Thus he prepared for his departure without wasting many regrets on his futile endeavors to discover the undiscoverable. On the contrary, he felt new hope bounding through his blood, and he was counting the days before his ship sailed, when Pemberton came to him with a message from Cumberland.

"The young fellow is dangerously ill; he wants to see you."

Harold went to his room, and found him in bed, haggard and changed with fever. He raised his eyes to his friend's face with a faint smile.

"Thanks for coming to me, dear old man! You see, I am going home."

"I see you have been going the pace too fast; but you'll pull through, lad—don't fear!" said Harold encouragingly. "And you must get leave and return home indeed. You can sail with me."

Cumberland closed his eyes with a slight smile, as if the thought for a moment pleased him; but, when he opened them again and looked up, Harold saw that the hope that had lighted them for an instant had fled.

"There is no home for me, Oliver, but my long home. I want you to promise me that you will see my father, and tell him not to grieve; tell him it is best so, and I was glad—you hear the word?—glad! Say it to him twice: he will understand."

"My dear boy, I'll promise to do anything you wish," returned Harold; and his voice broke as he grasped his friend's thin burning hand. "But you have much to live for Cumberland; try to rally, dear lad."

But Cumberland shook his head slightly and closed his eyes again, this time to hide the anguish in them, while the feverish flush upon his face faded into ghastly pale-ness.

"What is it?" said Harold, bending over him in sharp anxiety.

"I am afraid to live," he answered, in a low voice—"more afraid than I am to die."

"My dear Cumberland, you are feverish, and wandering a little."

"No, no; I cannot talk much, but I know what I am saying. See here, Oliver, you have been kind to me, kind as a brother; and I am sure you know how much I care for you, how much I wish I could express all——"

He stopped, feeling evidently far more than his words told, and yet feeling, as Englishmen do, that to say anything was to say too much.

Equally reticent, Harold sat dumb, grasping his hand, and inwardly wondering how one so young should care so little to live, and, more, should speak of life as a thing more to be feared than death.

In the momentary silence between them Cumberland seemed to regain courage, and was able to master his emotion.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

As an absent-minded professor was sitting at his desk writing one evening, one of his children entered, and he exclaimed, "What do you want? I can't be disturbed now." "I only want to say good night," answered the child. "Never mind now; to-morrow morning will do as well," said the professor.

We seldom regret having been too mild, too cautious, or too modest; but we often repent having been too violent, too precipitate, or too proud.

BYGONES!

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

Ye doubts and fears that once we knew,
Ye bitter words, of anger born;
Ye thoughts unkind, and deeds untrue,
Ye feelings of mistrust and scorn:
Against your memory we rebel—
We have outlived your foolish day;
No longer in our hearts you dwell—
Bygones! Bygones! pass away!

But oh, ye joyous smiles and tears,
Endearments fond, and pleasures past,
Ye hopes of life's first budding years,
Ye loves that seemed too bright to last;
Ye charities and words of peace,
Affection's sunshine after rain;—
Oh never let your blessings cease—
Bygones! Bygones! come again!

IN THE PAST.

BY C. HADDON CHAMBERS.

CHAPTER I.

"YOU will leave this house to-night."

"I am ready, sir."

"And with my will you will never enter it again."

The words were spoken slowly and sternly. Surely a father must have had terrible provocation before using them to his son!

Surely the son must have behaved most despicably to have deserved them! But the provocation had not been terrible nor the conduct despicable.

Frank Dewar had always been a wayward boy, and at the age of nineteen he was certainly wild. It was in the blood. For many generations back the males of the Dewar family were very famous for their wildness.

It was said of them that the process of sowing their wild oats extended over an unusually long period. They invariably began early and finished late.

In more than one conspicuous instance the conclusion had not come at all. The reckless sower had, while still madly scattering worthless seed, been gathered, fruitless, out of time.

The father who now pronounced sentence of banishment from home upon his son, had not in his youth and early manhood been an exception to the family tradition. It was not until he had reached thirty, and his friends had given him up in despair, that a change came.

Some men mend gradually. By slow degrees the light of wisdom, born of experience, grows upon their darkness, and one after another each folly is exposed to the improving judgment and abandoned. Such had not been the case with Mr. Dewar. All suddenly and without displaying the slightest indication of disposition to mend his ways, he took a moral leap from the Equator to the North Pole, and so afforded still further justification for the remark that a Dewar was incapable of moderation.

Mr. Dewar attached himself to a religious sect, famous for the rigidness of its moral code.

The rose became an ascetic, the lover of wine a total abstainer, and the most conspicuous redeeming virtue of his youth—a certain large heartedness—was lost in austerity.

Mr. Dewar had not sufficient charity left to condone in others the sins that had once been his.

One of the earliest results of his reform was his marriage with a woman who, in gentleness, and in pure charity, was well nigh perfect. They had two children—both boys.

The eldest happily escaped the family propensities. Inheriting in a modified degree the later qualities of his father, he passed a decorous boyhood—enjoying paternal approbation, if not paternal love—entered a profession, married early, and was altogether a commendable success.

When Mr. Dewar saw that his son, Frank, was growing up a reproduction of his own early self, he appeared to conceive a distinct dislike for him.

Deciding that the germs of wildness must be ruthlessly nipped in the bud, he held the parental reins with an irritating and galling tightness.

Unconscious that he was doing his utmost to warp a naturally open and truthful boy, he watched his every movement and doubted his every word.

Was it a natural though exaggerated solicitude lest his son should be as he had been, and live as he had lived? Or was it that his warped and diseased nature could not bear to contemplate the likeness of his own youth? I know not. But certain it was that the insane policy of watching and suspecting, tended to foster the antagonism he felt for his own child.

One other circumstance had the same effect. Mothers generally love the most wayward offspring best.

It was so with Mrs. Dewar; and in addition, Frank came in for that share of his mother's love which his father had denied her, and his methodical, calculating brother had neglected to cultivate.

The son returned it perhaps as folly as a mother's love—mysterious, unfathomable, deathless—may be returned.

* * * * * *

"And with my will you will never enter it again."

"And against your will be sure I shall not."

The likeness between father and son was very striking, as they stood facing each other a few paces apart, the former with pale and gloomily angry face, leaning against the mantelpiece, and the other grasping the back of a chair, and returning his father's look with proud defiance.

With the exception of the expressive brown eyes which his mother had given him, Frank had all the handsome features of the Dewars, from the square shaped forehead to the somewhat effeminate chin.

"You have brought this entirely upon yourself," said Mr. Dewar, after a long and painful silence. "You are drifting direct to perdition; you have grieved me beyond expression. Not a single command, not a single wish of mine have you regarded. I expressly forbade your remaining out of the house after nine in the evening. You are rarely home before eleven—generally much later. Your mother rose to let you in at two this morning. You had been with some fellows at a literary club, you said, but I now refuse to believe a word that falls from your lips. This quiet, regular, God-fearing home is not the home for you. Your presence defiles it—and I am resolved it shall not be defiled. We are told, if our right hand offends us to cut it off—I cut you off to-night."

"You may surely cut me off without insulting," replied Frank. "Whatever I am, I am certainly not a liar."

"A few words more and I have done," pursued Mr. Dewar, ignoring the young man's indignant protest. "When you are twenty-one you will receive your aunt's money. In the meantime I would advise you—though doubtless you will consider, as you always have, my advice valueless—I would advise you to give up your evil ways and companions, and try a little honest work. Hitherto you have led an idle—worse than an idle life. There is a rude awakening in store for you if you think to earn a livelihood by what you call your 'literary talent.' Try a little honest work," he continued, again ignoring the interruption: "and in the meantime the twenty pounds you will find in that envelope on the table will keep from want. That is all you need expect from me."

Mr. Dewar turned away, to intimate that the interview was at an end, and Frank moved towards the door with a strange new feeling at his heart, and wondering, poor fellow, whether it would be proper, under the circumstances, for him to proffer an adieu of any kind to his father. He was too proud, however, to take the initiative.

As he reached the door, his father's voice stopped him.

"You have forgotten your money."

"I have forgotten nothing," replied the young man. "If I cease to be your son, I will not remain a dependent upon you."

Then he opened the door and passed out.

As he crossed the hall a hand was stretched from an opposite door, and he was drawn into a room where, in the darkness, his mother's arms encircled him and her low sobs beat against his breast.

"You must not go, Frank," she whispered at last.

"Mother, I must. How can I stay here now?"

"I will speak to your father."

"He will not listen to you this time. He has held this threat of excommunication over me for a long time—until he has grown to believe that I tremble at the thought of it. Now he has resolved to carry it out. Let him do so."

"Frank, I can't let you go. I must speak to him first."

"You will only humiliate us both, mother."

"No, Frank. I promise you I shall not. Only a few words with him. Wait here for me."

Then she glided from the room, paused in the hall for a moment to collect herself, and entered her husband's presence.

It was agony for the son's proud heart to feel that his cold, harsh father was being pleaded with for his sake—an agony he had felt before, and endured for the sake of his mother's love.

For himself he had no fears of the sentence of banishment. He was young, brave and sanguine, and the slips he had had of life had served only to stimulate his thirst.

The prospect of release from the galling restraint of home inspired within him, not dread, but the most exhilarating anticipation.

Mrs. Dewar stood by her husband's chair with outward composure. Only the paleness of her face and the traces of recent weeping about the sad, tender brown eyes—traces only too often to be seen there—told of the tumultuous grief that was tearing her heart.

John Dewar did not look up from the paper he was reading, or affecting to read. He had expected this visit and was resolved that it should not succeed.

"John!"

"Well?" he replied, still without looking up.

"You know what I have come to you for."

"I do. It is useless."

"You will not send that boy out into the night alone."

"He has accustomed himself to going into the night alone," replied her husband, with a sneer in his voice.

"I am not here to excuse his faults, John. They have given as much anxiety to me as to you. It is because of them that I would try to bind him still closer to home and to home influences."

"He is unable to properly appreciate either."

"He is young," continued Mrs. Dewar—"young, wayward and impressionable—and you would throw him into the cruel arms of the world. Don't—don't do it, John!"

"It is utterly useless to argue the matter," was the cold reply. "Nothing will shake my resolve. I will hear no more on the subject, if you please."

Mrs. Dewar turned quickly and mechanically, and walked from the room, still outwardly calm, but the quivering lips had grown tight, and she moved like a somnambulist.

Through the open door Frank saw her in the light of the hall, and knew that his anticipations of her non-success had been realized. She came into the dark room and seated herself.

"Don't mind, mother," he whispered presently, whilst he knelt at her side and his tears fell unrestrainedly upon her dress.

"Where will you go?" she asked, in a voice dry and hard with despair.

"Go? Oh! I'll—I shall be all right."

He had not thought the matter out at all. The general idea that he would go from narrow limits into the broad free world, had been sufficient for him.

He was young, and the world was kind, it would hold out its right hand and welcome him. He would be all right.

But his mother was less sanguine.

"Where will you go?" she repeated.

"I know, mother! I'll go immediately to Tom Anson and the fellows I know at the Bulwer Club. Tom will put me in the way of getting a decent lodging."

"But you have no money."

"Yes, I have a little; over fifteen dollars, I think. He—my father—offered me some, but I would not take it. Tom will introduce me to some editors and I shall soon get work. You yourself have said that I may make a mark some day as an author; and I mean to do so."

So they talked with subdued voices in the darkness for some time, Frank trying hard to imbue his mother with his own hopefulness; but with little success.

True, her tears were dried, and she spoke with calmness; but there are moments when the dull despairing agony at our hearts is too great for outward emotion; and such a moment, now that it was absolutely decreed that she must lose her son, was Mrs. Dewar's.

But, ever unselfish, she was thankful for the outward calm, for it would deceive Frank and enable him to go away with less weight on his mind than he could otherwise have done.

What words she spoke need not be recorded.

You tender mothers who have, or have had, sons have doubtless spoken such words; and you sons who have, or have had, tender mother have doubtless heard them; words of ineffable love and thoughtfulness; words that die not soon, but linger the last of all softening memories in the very hardest hearts; words that angels pause to hear.

As Frank knelt at his mother's knee, listening to her voice and feeling her caressing hand straying over his hair, it is not strange that his soul swelled with the noblest aspirations and the purest resolves.

He would be all she asked, do all she said. Such aspirations are good to feel, and such resolves to make.

The former may subsequently sleep, or the latter be broken, but their conception is a moral gain, or at least an evidence of inherent good.

The great dining-room clock struck ten sonorous strokes, and Mrs. Dewar, with a slight shiver, rose.

"You must go now, my boy," she said, still maintaining her calm. "If you stay longer, you may miss your friends. Put everything you require into your portmanteau."

Then she led the way upstairs to his room and quietly assisted him in the easy task of packing the majority of his somewhat limited store of wearing apparel into a small portmanteau, which he could carry without difficulty.

When Frank descended, portmanteau in hand, he saw his mother standing, her back to the wall, upright and still, near the hall door.

The face, in its dead whiteness, with the closed eyes and the poor drawn mouth, spoke with terrible eloquence of the chill anguish of a woman who felt she was losing her all, whose heart was upon the rack, with its quivering strings drawn to the utmost tension.

Have not many of us felt that cruel strain and prayed that the suffering strings would break, so that we might die?

Frank kissed his mother's cheeks, and sobbed a good-bye. Then leaving her motionless against the wall and Joy cold with pain, he crushed his hat over his eyes and walked out into the night—and into the world.

CHAPTER II.

SITTING over his newspaper, Mr. Dewar was scarcely so composed as usual. The previous evening's debate in the house failed to rivet his whole attention, although he would have refused to acknowledge the fact, even to himself.

For although he possessed the greatest abhorrence of lying in others, and would not, himself, knowingly have uttered a falsehood, he habitually practiced self-deception with no small success. Strange that a man should choose himself as the victim of his own sophistry!

After scanning the columns with unfruitful diligence for some time, pausing occasionally and turning his head in a listening attitude, he let the paper fall on the floor, lay back in his chair, and reflected very pained his fingers through his hair in a manner peculiar to himself.

Perfectly at ease he looked, and well satisfied. But his looks belied him. His ease was a cheat, and his satisfaction a delusion.

A remote and small inner voice persisted in annoying him with its whispered doubts.

Presently Mr. Dewar rose. The silence without irritated him. Had Frank gone? If so, why had he heard no commotion in the hall? He was an inquisitive man, and he could not bear to be left in the dark as to even the most trifling circumstances which were going on around him.

Approaching nearer the door, he stopped and listened attentively. Then for the first time he heard a sound—Frank's voice, bidding his mother good-bye.

Then he heard the hall door close, after which the silence was unbroken, although eloquent even to him.

Mr. Dewar took up a volume of "Barnes on the Acts," and returned to his easy chair. But he was unable to read. The little voice, like the unseen cricket which, from its temporary shelter in our fireplace, suddenly bursts into animation after a long silence, returned to distract him.

He rang the bell. It was answered by one of the servants—a young woman of prepossessing face, and eyes at the time suspiciously red.

Little that goes on above-stairs escapes the attention of those below. The two servants of the Dewar household had not heard or seen much during the evening; but they possessed in a high degree the art of multiplying two by two, which they practiced in this instance with the usual success.

Then they wept, being retainers of some length of service and much attached to their mistress and "Master Frank;" and had Mr. Dewar heard the honest criticisms on his conduct which were uttered across the kitchen table, he would probably have been disagreeably astonished.

"Where is your mistress, Jane?"

"I'm not sure, sir; but I think she's gone to bed. I haven't seen her since—since ——"

She was going to say "Since Master Frank went," but she changed color and added instead: "Since ten o'clock."

"Has cook gone to bed?" continued Mr. Dewar.

"Yes, sir."

"Then you had better go too; there will be no prayers to-night."

Mr. Dewar delayed for some minutes before taking his candle. Perhaps he felt no great inclination to meet his wife just then, or perhaps the events of the evening had opened up a train of thought which was not conducive to sleep.

He found several trivial excuses for delay, such as winding up his watch—a task he always performed in his bedroom—replacing "Barnes" on the bookshelves, and raking the already cold embers from the grate.

At last he extinguished the lights of the room, took his candle, and walked slowly upstairs.

Mrs. Dewar was in bed, her eyes closed, and breathing slowly and regularly. Was she asleep? No. Her husband knew that she was not—he knew that under such circumstances sleep was impossible to her. Sleeplessness was no new burden to her.

She had often lain awake till long after midnight, listening anxiously for the tap of her errant boy at the hall door, to creep out of bed when she heard it at last, and down the stairs to admit him.

"Are you awake, Mary?" asked Mr. Dewar, after remaining silent for some time.

"Yes, John," replied a low, weary little voice.

"Then perhaps you will tell me if that boy has gone."

Of course he knew the boy had gone; but his humor was too bad to admit of silence. It must find some vent before he went to sleep.

"Yes, he has gone," replied Mr. Dewar, mechanically.

"And was it by your connivance that he went away like a thief, without coming to see me first?"

"He did not know that you wished to see him," protested the wife, wearily.

"Oh! of course you will defend him. You always have, in opposition to me. I have always been last in your consideration. Is it to be wondered at that a son plunges headlong on the road to destruction when he is protected and encouraged by his mother in disobedience to his father?"

"I have never done that, John."

"The very fact that Frank has left this house without attempting to say good-bye to me proves that he is thoroughly hardened and base, and that I have pursued the proper course with respect to him."

Very sadly in need of proofs was John Dewar.

"Do you hear?" he asked, after a pause, as there was no reply.

"Yes, I hear, John. But my head is splitting."

Then Mr. Dewar was silent; and after awhile he slept.

And all through the long watches of the night the wife and mother lay, with aching head and aching heart, hopelessly awake. Her brain burned with its overload of thought; her heart bowed with its overload of woe.

But she was not all forsaken. She had her faith, simple as that of a child; and she clung to it. In silent prayer her burden was lightened, and the welcome tears wet her pillow.

* * * * * *

The Bulwer was a small and unpretentious club of a literary character, and Frank

Dewar was its newest and youngest member.

Hitherto on the night of his dismissal from home he immediately repaired. He had several friends among the members, including the Mr. Tom Anson of whom he had spoken to his mother; and as it was the Club social evening, he was sure to find most of them there.

He was greeted by a buzz of welcome. His company was particularly acceptable on social nights, as he played the piano well, and could use the light tenor voice he possessed with considerable effect.

Tenors are always socially popular now-a-days.

Mr. Tom Anson, who, being editor of a small weekly paper, was considered quite a personage at the club, immediately came forward to greet the young man.

"Better late than never!" he cried. "I was afraid you were not going to turn up."

"I want to speak to you a moment," said Frank, taking his arm, and drawing him aside.

"What's the matter? You look quite excited."

"I've left home for good, Tom."

Mr. Anson expressed his surprise in a prolonged stare.

"What—what have you done that for, lad?"

"I couldn't help myself," replied Frank. "My father turned me out. You know we've been getting on horribly for a long time. He's a perfect tyrant, doesn't think I ought to be out after dark, and because I couldn't meet his views—well, he's given me the sack."

"And what are you going to do?" ejaculated Tom, sympathetically.

"Make a living somehow, of course; with my pen, if it's good enough."

"Is the old gentleman going to supply you with coin?"

"No," answered Frank, coloring, "I wouldn't take it from him."

Tom glanced at the young face with superior pity.

"And, I say, Tom, I want you to put me in the way of getting comfortable lodgings. Any vacant rooms in your house?"

"Oh! I'll see that you're all right, my lad," cried Mr. Anson, carelessly. "And now for the present let's enjoy ourselves and forget all this bother."

In a few minutes the general conviviality was resumed, and Frank became the life and soul of the party. Never had his spirits been so high, so wild.

He fairly carried the company with him, and the evening was afterwards looked back upon as one of the most successful in the history of the Club.

It was considerably past midnight, and Frank was at the piano, where he had been singing song after song.

His voice was small but sweet and sympathetic, and he liked singing. He was about to leave the piano when there came a special request from one of the company:

"Let us have that Christy song you gave us last time, Frank. You know which I mean."

Frank did know. It was the very last song he would have chosen that night, but, having no excuses to offer, he sang it. It was a commonplace ballad enough, but with a pretty taking air and words full of sound sentiment that spoke of a happy home and a mother's love.

He sang the ballad well, the better perhaps because it made his heart ache. When it was finished, he still sat at the instrument running his fingers over the keys. He dare not turn round, for his eyes were full of tears.

He dare not let his thoughts linger with his mother, who, he knew was lying awake thinking of him, lest he should have wept outright.

To have been able to lean forward upon the key-board and sob would have been a boon to him—better still to have been away in the wilderness alone, where he could have cried mightily, and relieved his breast of its strange oppression.

He longed, now, to be alone, and he rose from the piano determined upon retiring.

When he turned to the room, he found that during his preoccupation a great change had taken place.

A large number of the members had disappeared, and the few who remained were preparing to depart. Frank hastily looked into the other rooms. They were all empty.

"Where is Anson?" he then asked.

"Gone home," was the answer.

The indignant blood rushed to Frank's face. This was the world that he had expected to receive him with open arms! These were the men he had counted upon and called friends, the men who had said they would guide him, and see that he was all right!

It was his first experience of the outer world he had thought so fair, and a bitter one. The first of many fond illusions had gone, and the edifice of cards must tumble!

Frank put on his hat and walked out into the deserted streets with a heart of bitterness.

"Miserable, mean wretches," he muttered, turning up the collar of his coat, for a soft soaking rain was falling.

"They avoid me because I have no money or prospects, I suppose. They little know me if they imagine that I would come on them for anything."

Turning into Oxford Street he stopped under a lamp-post and looked at his watch. It was a quarter past two. What was he to do at that hour? He knew that only expensive hotels kept night porters, and his means were terribly limited.

He stood upon the wet pavement hesitating, and burning with anger and shame, anger against the heartless, selfish men who had abandoned him, and shame at the part he himself had played during the evening.

It was a critical moment in Frank Dewar's life. In his humor then the very slightest incident might determine his fate, for good or ill.

Suddenly he heard a step behind him, and he was touched on the shoulder.

"Which way are you going, Dewar?"

Turning quickly, Frank recognized one of the club members, named Carson, whom he knew but very slightly.

"I'm not quite sure yet," he replied with some confusion.

"Forgive me for asking you," said Mr. Carson easily: "but the fact is I heard you tell some of the fellows that you had left home, and wanted to find lodgings, and it struck me that in staying there, and making the evening so enjoyable for us all, you were forgetting your own interests. Then when you left, I thought that you might have to tramp a long way in the rain before finding an hotel you could get into. That is why I took the liberty of following you, to offer you a shakedown."

"You're very good," replied Frank, quickly; "but——"

"Please don't say but," interrupted Mr. Carson, calmly, and recognizing the young man's ready pride. "And please don't say that I am good. It is, as I said, only a shakedown that I can offer you. My lowly diggings have the advantage of being close at hand. By the way, in one respect they are the opposite of lowly—they are on the third floor. Do honor me by accepting shelter."

Frank could not well persist in refusing. The offer was kindly made. There was no obtrusive, pride-wounding sympathy in Mr. Carson's even, agreeable voice. He spoke as if begging a favor. Frank was deeply touched.

Kindness from an almost entire stranger at that moment, when his feelings were sore and smarting from the desertion of his friends, could not fail to affect him.

"I will come with pleasure,' he said; "if you are sure it will not put you out at all."

"Not in the slightest degree," Mr. Carson assured him. "And the sooner we get home the better. This gentle rain is very insinuating."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Miss Marchmont's Picnic.

BY E. T.

A STIFLING room in a crowded house; noisy children quarreling, and in the hot room a man writing, writing as if life hung upon his pen.

Life! Ah, more than his own life—the bread of a child, who stands a little way off, looking wistfully at the bowed head and rapidly moving hand.

She was a very fair child, whose shabby dress could not conceal the exquisite symmetry of the childish limbs, or the patrician beauty of her delicate features.

Large brown eyes, soft brown curls, and a pure complexion she shares with the man writing so busily.

Suddenly he looks up, and smiles to greet the child. In a moment she springs to his side, and nestles in his arms.

"Oh, papa, please may I go to Miss Marchmont's picnic?"

The arms folding her drop nerveless, the face bending over her grows deadly pale, as her father repeats the words—"Miss Marchmont's picnic!"

"Yes," the child cries, eagerly. "In a beautiful, beautiful place, with trees and flowers and a fountain, and we go in a boat, and have cake and ice-cream; and Mrs. Wilkins can get me a ticket."

All this delivered without taking breath. But as if Mrs. Wilkins was waiting a propitious moment, a portly, good-natured woman walked into the room, and said, "If you'll trust her to me, Mr. Dent, I'll take the best of care of her."

Twice Henry Dent tried to speak, and failed; but at last the dry, stiff lips obeyed him, and he said, "Where are you going, and when?"

"Well, sir, it's a picnic that's given free to the poor children, and this is the third one has took place this summer. It's at Miss Marchmont's place, up the river, and there's a boat, sir, at one o'clock this afternoon; and I've four tickets, sir, for myself and Bobby, and any two I like to take. If I ain't making too free, sir, you're more than welcome to the two spare ones for yourself and Dottie."

Again the struggle to speak, and the voice is hoarse that answers—

"You are very kind. I will take them, and thank you."

"That's well, sir," said Mrs. Wilkins, heartily. "A breath of fresh air will do you good as well as Dottie."

"This lady," he asks—"does she give the picnic?"

"Yes, sir, bless her! They say she's no end of money her uncle left her; and it's a great, big place, sir. Shall I dress Dottie for you, sir? It's near twelve."

"Thanks," was the reply. "Your one white dress, Dottie. We will do honor to Miss Marchmont."

He emphasized the name bitterly, as if contrasting his own biting poverty with the lavish generosity of his proposed hostess; but Dottie slid down from his lap, and trotted contentedly after Mrs. Wilkins to a little bedroom adjoining the shabby sitting-room.

The trip in the boat was a delight to her, in spite of her father's grave face, and her little feet fairly danced as they crossed the plank that led directly to the picnic grove.

The afternoon was nearly over, when Henry Dent, sitting at the very edge of the grove overlooking the stately house where Miss Marchmont lived, saw a lady and gentleman coming slowly down the path leading to the grove. He drew back hastily out of sight, and watched them.

She followed the direction of her father's eyes, and saw a tall, handsome gentleman, of some forty years, escorting a slender, graceful lady of perhaps twenty-two or three.

"But please, papa," said Dottie, presently, as the couple disappeared in one of the grove paths, "tell me the rest. The prince loved the beggar girl, and wouldn't marry the princess. I thought the prince always married the princess in the fairy stories."

"This prince did not," said her father, "though the king, his father, threatened to turn him away from his kingdom."

"And did he marry the beggar maid?"

"Yes, and his father turned him away, and he worked hard, as men must do who are turned away from their kingdom, and he tried to make the beggar maid happy. She lived a few years with the prince, and she gave him a tiny child to love, and then, when the child was only three years old, she died.

"And then the prince worked on and on for the little child, until one day, one lovely summer day, from afar off he saw the princess."

"The one his father wanted him to marry?"

"The same one. And when he saw her, he knew that he loved her."

"Oh, how nice!" cried Dottie. "Did he marry her, then?"

But before the answer could be given, there came a clap of thunder, and a scurrying of many feet.

"Miss Marchmont says we are all to go into the house," someone cried, as the children and their guardians hurried by Henry Dent and his child.

"Come, papa," Dottie urged; "we shall get wet."

He rose heavily, suffering her to lead him to the stately house, where already the wide hall was crowded with laughing, merry children.

He was dizzy with long-continued work, poor fare, deep emotion, and, scarcely knowing what he did, he staggered into a small room leading from the hall, and quietly fainted away.

"How long ago was it," he wondered, "since he came to Miss Marchmont's picnic?"

A gentle voice near him said, "Awake? Ah, this will not do!" as the speaker caught sight of the agitated face.

The invalid looked up, recognizing the handsome gentleman he had seen escorting Miss Marchmont.

"I feel," Henry Dent said, "how much I am intruding here. What madness possessed me to come?"—trying vainly to rise.

A firm, kindly hand restrained him.

"I am your physician," said the stranger. "Doctor Harding, at your service. As a doctor, I forbid you to stir."

Then there was a little rustle, and Miss Marchmont glided to the bedside.

"And as your cousin," she said, "I bid you welcome to your home."

"My home!" he said, sadly. "Ah, Celia, I forfeited that long years ago."

"Can he bear to hear me?" the lady asked, looking at the physician.

Gentle professional fingers consulted the patient's pulse; keen professional eyes looked into the patient's face, and then Doctor Harding said, "It will be better to tell him."

"Dear Harry," the lady said then, "your father forgave you before he died."

"Stop! Let me think! He forgave me?"

"Fully and freely. Do not weep."

"I am weak as a child," was the pitiful, murmur; "but tears may come from happiness, Celia."

"I know! When uncle was ill we tried to find you, but could not. And so, after he died, the will was read that he made in his anger, leaving me everything. He wished it to be so, Harry, but he made a new will, and left it in my care, restoring your inheritance if you returned within ten years. It is not yet two years since he died, and this is your home, Harry, not mine, though uncle left me independent."

"But—you?" Harry said, brokenly.

"Celia's future will be my care," said the doctor, putting his arm around Miss Marchmont's waist; "and we here and now invite you to be best man at the wedding."

"Well!" said another voice in the doorway "if this is proper treatment for a man just out of a fever——"

"Oh, Aunt Jane!" cried Harry, holding out his weak hands, "come here to be kissed!"

He was glad to bury his troubled face in her bosom.

"You're not to be rid of me," said the old lady, motioning to Celia and the doctor to leave the patient to her. "I go with the house; and as Celia won't need me after October, I'm going to keep house for you and that beautiful baby, Dottie. Where did she get that ridiculous name?"

"Oh, auntie," said Harry, feebly, "her name is Jane, after an aunt of mine. Dottie is only baby talk."

"That's all the talk you're fit for now," was the reply. "There, shut your eyes, and I'll fan you, and tell you all you want to know. Your father made it all right before he died, and Doctor Harding is wealthy, so Celia's loss need not trouble you."

But as he dropped off to sleep, Henry Dent finished his fairy story in his thoughts.

"The princess came back to his own, but his heart was heavy, for he never married the princess."

Scientific and Useful.

COPPER AND TIN.—Copper is now coming into use for roofing in place of tin. Its first cost is larger, but its durability and the absence of constant repairs needed by the tin roofing, makes the copper cheaper in the end.

A NEW NEEDLE.—In a needle which is easily threaded, the butt of the needle is split so that the thread can be slipped into it without the delicate process of running it through the eye. The ends close together with a spring, and hold the thread secure when once it is inserted. For persons with weak eyes or unsteady hands it may prove useful.

WOOD SHAVINGS.—Very thin, small shavings of wood are now used in France, not only for packing, but for filling mattresses, littering cattle, filtering liquids, stuffing horse collars, etc. The material is known as wood wool, and, when derived from resinous wood, is said to be preferable to hair for bedding, the resin preventing it from absorbing moisture. In workshops the wood wool is replacing cotton waste for cleaning machinery, as it costs far less.

GREEN PAPER FOR BOOKS.—Several of the French railway companies have resolved on having their printing done on green paper instead of white. Their reason for the change is, that black letters on white paper have proved trying to the eyesight of their work-people. Black on green has been recognized as a good combination, many railway tickets being printed in this style. Possibly we shall yet have books printed on greenish paper in preference to dead white.

HORSES AND FIRE.—A New York man has invented a device to save horses in case of fire. It can be worked either by electricity or by hand. At a certain temperature a bell will ring, and the moment the bell shall ring the doors will fly open, the horses will be unhitched and two small streams of water will strike each horse in the face. To escape the water the horses will back out of the stalls, and once out of them they will have an opportunity of seeing a way of escape through the open doors.

A NEW STEEL GATE.—A new kind of folding steel gate and shutter has been introduced. The gate folds into a narrow compass and leaves the gangway clear. For the doors of hoists or strong rooms and for cases of fire the device is likely to be useful, especially as a very young person can shut and lock it. It is constructed of vertical channel steels in pairs, channel to channel, with proper framing and stiffeners. The gate or shutter does not obstruct the air or light, and the latter can be applied to bed-room windows as a security against burglars.

Farm and Garden.

THE POULTRY.—Do not forget to supply gravel or finely-broken bones, charcoal occasionally, and variety of feed at all times, to the fowls after winter shall have closed in and they will no longer have access to the bare, unfrozen ground.

FEED.—To economize hay, an excellent authority suggests: "Two pounds of a mixture of middlings, bran, ground oats and corn, of equal parts, added to twenty-four pounds of straw or corn-fodder, will give more growth than twenty-five pounds of the best timothy, and costs about half as much."

GEESE.—Geese do not receive as much attention as they should on farms especially adapted to the rearing of water fowl. Besides yielding a regular income in the way of feathers, they are one of the most profitable fowls for the market. Much easier reared than turkeys, they sell as readily in most seasons at as good profits.

WATER IN WINTER.—Empty all troughs and drinking vessels every night in order to prevent accumulations of ice in them. It is much easier to do this than to chop out the ice in the morning in order to water the stock. Ice-water is not conducive to the thrift of the animals in winter, and the troughs should, therefore, be kept as free from ice as possible.

ASPARAGUS.—It is safe to assert that not half of the farmers of the country have an asparagus bed in the home garden, and it is equally safe to say that no piece of ground on the farm will pay as well, if properly cared for, as a good bed of this delicious vegetable. It is but little trouble to care for, and it furnishes a supply of excellent green food at a time of year when such food is most desirable.

WARMTH.—A lining of building paper on the walls of the barns and stables will cost but a trifling sum, yet will add greatly to the warmth and comfort of the animals. It will stop up the cracks and crevices, that are usually the sources of too much cold air entering. The paper can be easily applied by tacking it in place, or it may be held in position by nailing laths up and down over it.

SNOW-STORMS.—Sheep are injured more by snow-storms than any other animals, as the sheep are compelled to remain on damp locations in the event of a gradual thaw. Foot rot, in sheep, often results from too much exposure to dampness, and the flock should have a dry, open shed. Its floor should be cleared of snow and the yard well drained. Ewes that are expected to lamb should be kept in the barn-shed—warm and well protected.

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We would direct the attention of our friends and readers to the *marked reduction in our club rates* as given above, and respectfully ask those who are in the habit of getting up clubs for THE POST to enter the field soon as possible and try to increase their lists.

We are hoping to get a great many good sized clubs for the present year, and trust every one of our subscribers and readers will make an effort to send one. We make it easy for you to do so, for we have *reduced the club rates* to such a figure as to place THE POST within the reach of all, and it will require but a little effort on the part of any one to secure enough subscribers at the very low rates we offer to make a club.

Just think of it, 10 copies of THE POST *one year, with an extra copy for getter up of club, making 11 copies for $10.*

You can, dear reader, without much trouble, get ten persons to take THE POST at one dollar per year and thereby secure a copy free for yourself.

If you cannot obtain a club of ten, we hope you will try and get a few subscribers and secure the rates which are offered for a less number.

THE POST is much lower in price than any other first-class family paper in the country, and we think it only needs to be laid before the community to be subscribed for at once by thousands to whom it may still be a stranger, save, perhaps, by reputation. Of course we must depend in a great degree upon our present subscribers, friends and readers to show THE POST to their acquaintances and neighbors, and to speak a good word in our behalf. Their return for such efforts must be the pleasure they give to others, the consciousness of assisting in the good work of circulating THE POST, and enabling us to make it better, more useful and entertaining than ever before. Will they try and do it for us? Let each of our present friends and subscribers try to get a few new subscribers at least.

Sample copies for the purpose will be sent to those who wish them.

At the Right Moment.

It is more difficult to see than is commonly supposed. Ruskin holds that to see something and to describe it in a plain way is the greatest thing the human soul ever does in this world. "Hundreds of people," he says, "can talk, for one who can think, and thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one." Without going so far as this enthusiastic seer, who, in the same breath, denounces metaphysicians and philosophers as "the greatest trouble the world has to deal with," it will be admitted that the principal object of education is to knock the scales off our eyes. Between the man who knows how to use his eyes and the man who does not there is all the difference between a cultured or uncultured man. Capacity to see enables a man to enjoy all that his eyes rest upon.

A gentleman, who had shown a stranger his park, his pictures, and his treasures, was astonished at being thanked for giving away a share in his possessions.

"How a share?" he exclaimed. "You have let me look at them," was the reply, "and what more then can you do yourself?"

Many people use their ears when they ought to use their eyes. They see with their ears. We must, of course, often be content to see with our ears, or, as it is commonly put, we must take many things for granted. Because we have not seen Europe, we are not to suppose that there is no such country in existence.

It is not, however, either safe or wise to trust the ear when the eye can be used. If we look through other people's spectacles we are sure to get dim or distorted views. You must have felt the inconvenience of taking some things on trust. You have been disappointed with the friend, the house, the farm, the shop, the business, or the holiday resort to which you were so strongly recommended by "one who knows," and whom you believed, for the reason that many people believe strangers, because he had never deceived you before.

It is well to remember that in mere pursuits than conjuring it is necessary to gain the confidence of those who are to be cheated. But there may have been no intention to deceive. It may be that you, being long-sighted and lazy, have merely borrowed a pair of short-sighted spectacles.

In this connection we must remember there are also men who give attention to nothing but trifles. Their eyes are not eyes at all, but microscopes. The objects they love are, like those painted by Clovio, so small that they can be recognized only by the aid of a glass. They are overwhelmed with the minutiæ of life. They write volumes on a single scale of a butterfly's wing, transcribe the Lord's Prayer on a dime, put the Bible into a walnut, make fifty boxes to fit in one the size of a bean, and do all manner of useless things with an ingenuity which, if properly directed, might have been serviceable to themselves and their fellows.

You have, doubtless, some one of this kind among your acquaintances. He is always working and worrying, yet with little result. He is the mountain in labor and produces a mouse. The truth is that he is too busy to make progress, for he never raises his head above the sea of detail to "take stock" of the situation, and to assure himself that he is not swimming in a circle. He has no plans, no system, nothing but details—thorns that choke any good seed that may have fallen in his way.

These lovers of too much detail, or triflers, are generally bores. They spoil all the good things that are said by raising some question of fact or authority. That darky certainly was one of them, who, when the negro preacher informed his flock that Adam was made of wet clay and set up against some palings to dry, rose to ask, "Who made the palings?"

"Trifles," said Michael Angelo, "make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." Attention to trifles is certainly essential, but the trifles also must be essential. A zoologist, or a student of natural history, ought to be ashamed to confess that he does not know the number of a cat's toes; but a grocer, a joiner, a mechanic, or a lawyer may make the confession without a blush. There may be, as Dr. Johnson maintains, nothing too little for so little a creature as man, but it is precisely because he is little that man must be content, with Isaac Newton, to pick the pebbles on his own beach, and to leave his neighbor's pebbles severely alone. It is by studying our own little things that we "attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible."

Neglect of this study is indeed responsible for many of our troubles. Like some persons of eminence, we form plans and ignore or avoid details, and then are astonished at their failure. We set out upon a journey imperfectly equipped, and before we are many miles from home certain trifles bear in upon us most unpleasantly.

We form an army of fighting men, and overlook the detail as to whether their bayonets are made of steel or tin. We preach the necessity of doing the duty that lies nearest, and there comes a time in our own life when the accumulated details of our own neglected duty heap themselves into a grave mound.

Napoleon declared that in military operations some things depend on "a dog's barking or a goose's cackling," and the importance he attached to details is given as a reason why he watched rather than tempted events.

Great issues are sometimes traceable to trifling causes. A French dynasty was changed by the grotesque figure that a noble duke cut at a ball in the presence of his queen. As a rule, however, trifles merely indicate the progress and preparation of events, and the best plan is to let alone useless trifles, and seize upon the right ones at the right moment.

GOOD manners are conspicuously shown by attention to friends in sorrow. Many people feel a sort of embarrassment in the presence of grief; they find it hard to put their sympathy into words, and shirk the effort by arguing that in the circumstances visitors will be a nuisance, and far better away. But, in point of fact, friendship is never more appreciated than at such times; the kindly feeling shown carries a certain consolation, while neglect adds a forlorn sense to sorrow, suggesting that our acquaintances are but fair-weather ones, prompt to flit away when our contributions to their amusement are checked. Conduct that can be interpreted in such a light as this is in the worst possible taste.

SOME people are all quality; you would think they were made up of nothing but title and genealogy. The stamp of dignity defaces in them the very character of humanity, and transports them to such a degree of haughtiness that they reckon it below themselves to exercise either good nature or good manners.

HE that sees ever so accurately, ever so finely, into the motives of other people's acting, may possibly be entirely ignorant as to his own. It is by the mental as the corporeal eye—the object may be placed too near the sight to be seen truly, as well as too far off; nay, too near to be seen at all.

JUSTICE is never so slender to us as when we first practise it. It grows in the imagination. It is enlarged by experience. It includes more elements, it touches things with a finer stroke, and it demands more exquisite duties, every single day and year that a man lives, who lives at all right.

ALLOWING the performance of an honorable action to be attended with labor, the labor is soon over, but the honor is immortal; whereas, should even pleasure wait on the commission of what is dishonorable, the pleasure is soon gone, but the dishonor is eternal.

ALL affectation and display proceed from the supposition of possessing something better than the rest of the world possesses. Nobody is vain of possessing two legs and two arms, because this is the precise quantity of either sort of limb which everybody possesses.

THERE is nothing of which we are apt to be so lavish as of time, and about which we ought to be more solicitous, since without it we can do nothing in this world. Time is what we want most, but what, alas! we use worst.

HE knows little of himself or of the world who does not think it sufficient happiness to be free from sorrow.

WE should not imagine that all are friends that flatter or enemies that censure.

The World's Happenings.

Scranton has a 9-year-old incendiary under arrest.

In Burlington, Vt., the street cars have been put on runners.

Duck hunting in Maryland is a regularly organized trade.

America has more money invested in dairies than in banks.

A fruit tub, valued at 10 cents, has given rise to a law suit in Reading.

Ruby I. Paradise is the name of the postmaster at Concordia, Kan.

Linen was first made in England in 1253, and only worn by the rich.

"Winter sky" is the name applied to one of the gray shades, now so popular.

In one of the New York hotels the dining-room and kitchen are in the ninth story.

Ex-Governor Roberts, of Texas, who has just taken unto himself a wife, is 78 years old.

Hare hunting is becoming a popular recreation among the ladies of North Carolina.

In Mexico laborers get from 18 to 25 cents a day, and are often paid in farm produce.

San Francisco society is "shocked" because a young millionaire has married a governess.

Martin Collins, of Boston, although 94 years of age, still works at his trade of shoemaking.

The literature of the Chinese contains very little about love. Their stories are mostly about cats.

There are now published in the City of Mexico 8 or 10 papers devoted exclusively to the bull ring.

It is proposed to begin the employment of colored persons in some of the Charleston, S. C., cotton mills.

Nine cables connect Europe and America. Altogether there are now in use 122,000 nautical miles of cable.

A man at Macon, Ga., was obliged to postpone his wedding because he was on a jury in an important case.

The railroad train used by the Czar in his travels is the same as was formerly used by Napoleon III. It consists of 20 cars.

Conductors and drivers on a Newark, N. J., street railway company have been reduced in wages from $10.28 to $6.34 per week.

A Georgia undertaker advertises that he has "two brand new, elegant hearses—one for the white and one for the colored people."

A child in Cloves, Ohio, had the end of its tongue eaten off by putting some caustic lye in its mouth while its mother's back was turned.

A Swiss alarm clock produces at the hour for which it is set a rooster, who crows loud and shrill enough to quickly awaken even the man who retired very late.

London women of fashion have apparently settled the theatre bonnet question by adopting a crush hat, without which, it is said, few ladies attend places of amusement.

There is a lady living in Jackson, Miss., so deeply affected by the loss of her husband, whose death occurred recently, that every day she writes him a long letter, and with her own hands places it on his grave.

A Kansas City confectioner drew crowds of curious people to his store and sold quantities of candy by suspending five dead mice from miniature scaffolds and labeling them with the names of the condemned Anarchists.

An altogether heartless thief in Bluffton, Ga., stole a woman's set of false teeth. He probably afterward discovered they were almost valueless except to the owner, for the latter found them on the street near her home.

The Poor Directors of Berks county, Pa., have been figuring on the money value of sermons, and come to the conclusion they are worth $3 each—at least they intend paying that amount to clergymen who preach in the almshouse.

Jeremiah Coleman, while walking on the streets at New Brunswick, N. J., turned to one side to avoid a dirt heap and collided with a lamp post. The stem of a pipe he was smoking was driven into his throat, severing an artery.

A man in a Western town hanged himself to a bed-post by his suspenders. The coroner's jury, which was composed of mothers, decided that "the deceased came to his death by coming home drunk and mistaking himself for his pants."

Some of the young people of Cairo, Ill., had a candy-pulling recently, and everybody was having a jolly time until suddenly the house cat slipped from a shelf above the stove and fell into the boiling molasses. It put such a damper on the entertainment that the party soon broke up. The cat died.

An Atlanta man named Fonte went into a barber shop one afternoon recently to be shaved, and the barber called his attention to a slight swelling on the inside of his neck. It kept growing, and before he left the chair it was as big as a hen's egg. The swelling looks like a very big wen and it is very hard.

A buzz saw broke while running at a high rate of speed in Corvallis, Oregon, the other day, and a piece striking William Buchanan in the arm, just below the shoulder, cut it off so quickly and easily that he didn't know that he was hurt until he saw his arm lying at his feet. Then he clasped the bleeding stump and ran to a neighboring house for help.

The mystery attached to a window pane in a Lewiston, Me., house has at last been solved. All attempts to clean the glass failed, notwithstanding several persons had attempted it, and it was finally decided to have the pane removed. It was then discovered that there were two panes instead of one in the sash, and that the irremovable dirt was on the inside of each, and of course could not be reached by the cleaner.

HER LETTERS.

BY WM. W. LONG.

One by one I laid them on the fire-hot heart,
  Her letters. Lo! how they writhed in the flame's fierce sway,
Like a human thing—then a coldness froze my soul,
  And I knew that my heart, not her letters, was burned away.

I breathe, I live, yet my heart is dead—poor heart,
  It bade farewell to hope and died last night:
Burned to ashes, bitter ashes, cold and gray,
  Lying there in the new morn's light.

Her letters were tender and sweet as Love's wine of life,
  And pure as the stars that shine above;
But my hand was iron, and my heart was ice,
  As I gave them up to the fire's hot love.

And the woman who wrote them—would she care
  If she know what only now remains?
A pile of ashes, cold and gray—a pile of ashes
  Kissed by the morning sun's gold stains.

My vigil is over—the night is past—
  My vigil is over—yes, 'tis done—what then?
Go to the new day's work, dead heart—
  Put on your mask—meet your fellow-men.

Should I Have Spoken.

BY A. T. RAIKES.

EARLY in the year of 1875 I received an invitation from an old friend of mine, Colonel Armitage, to run down to his house, Medlicott Grange, in Berkshire, for some hunting and a couple of balls.

As in those days I was—well, some years younger than I am now, and (having but lately returned from India on sick leave) very keen on all sorts of amusements, I wrote off a hurried note of acceptance, and speedily followed it.

I knew Mrs. Armitage slightly, and was well acquainted with the colonel's taste in champagne, besides which I had met, not long before, an uncommonly pretty sister of his, whom I thought it would be by no means unpleasant to meet again; so I started off in the best of spirits to catch the 4.30 train at Paddington.

I calculated a run of two hours to give me ample time for the three miles' drive from the station, and to dress for dinner at eight.

However, [illegible] there was a break-down on the line, which kept me kicking my heels at a wretched little junction for over an hour, and we only reached Eastbury station at 7 o'clock. There was no help for it. I dashed into the carriage sent to meet me, and arrived at the Grange in as short a time as Armitage's steady old coachman would allow, but found my host alone, awaiting me in the hall, with outstretched hand and genial welcome.

I knew he was a regular martinet for punctuality, so was not surprised when he hurried me up directly to my room, with orders to dress sharp. It was a large and well appointed room, with a bright fire and candles, which looked very cheery after my cold drive.

"All right, old chap, I'll send Reggie up to show you the way down in a quarter of an hour," were the colonel's last words, as he left me to my toilet.

I dressed rapidly, but remembering the long passages, unexpected steps, intricate turnings and numerous staircases I had traversed on my way up, waited for my promised conductor.

Suddenly the gong thundered through the house, and I, thinking I was forgotten, put out my candles and turned to the door—when it was softly opened, and a young man appeared, who beckoned to me.

I followed him into the passage, which was rather dark, and began to say something expressive of my obligation to him; but he silenced me with a wave of the hand, and preceded me, with noiseless steps and averted face, along the passage.

I thought this was odd, but my surprise increased when he took an abrupt turn to the left, which I did not remember, and we found ourselves in a long, low, oak-panelled corridor, dimly lighted by a hanging lamp.

I began to feel a curious sensation stealing over me, and endeavored to speak, but was withheld by an undefined feeling, so followed my guide in perfect silence to the end of the corridor.

He then passed through a green baize door, up a flight of corkscrew stairs, and through another passage, I still feeling myself impelled to follow, till he stopped, opened a door, and stood back for me to pass before him.

I had not seen his face before, but had observed he was above the middle height, with a good figure and rather military gait, his hair was fair and cut very short.

Now, however, I saw his face: it was ashy white, with such an expression of horror and fear in his widely-opened eyes as froze my blood; I again made an ineffectual attempt to speak to him, but he motioned me imperiously to enter, and I felt constrained to obey.

I found myself in an oddly-shaped room, only lighted by the pale rays of the winter moon, which shone in coldly through the curtainless windows.

It was evidently an unused apartment, for there was no carpet, and my footsteps sounded hollow on the boards.

Between the windows, half in shadow, half in moonlight, stood a large bed. As I gazed upon it, my eyes became gradually accustomed to the dim light, and I observed with a shudder that it was draped with black, and decorated with tall black plumes like those on a hearse,—and there was a motionless form extended upon it.

I glanced round for my guide—he was gone, and the door was shut, though I had heard no sound.

A thrill of horror ran through my veins, I felt an almost irresistible desire for flight, but again the same inexplicable force urged me on, and I approached the bed with slow and trembling steps.

There lay a young, and as far as I could see, beautiful girl; dressed as a bride, in white satin and lace, a wreath of orange blossoms on her head and the long white veil covering, though not obscuring, her features; but oh! horror!—the front of her dress and veil were all dabbled and soaked in blood which I could see flowed from a deep open gash in her white throat.

My head swam—and I remembered no more * * * * * Suddenly I felt a cold shock in my face, and opened my eyes to find myself on the ground with my head supported by my kind host, who was looking down on me with anxiety expressed in his face.

As [illegible] bewildered senses reasserted themselves, I remembered what I had seen, and with an exclamation sprang to my feet. There was the same bed, but in [illegible] I saw that it was without the [illegible] bandages I had seen before, and was totally untenanted.

Colonel Armitage began asking me some questions, but seeing that I was much too dazed to answer, he took me by the arm, and half led me, half supported me, for I was [illegible] and giddy, back to my own room. When there he put me into an armchair, gave me a glass of water, and exclaimed: "My dear fellow! What on earth is the matter with you? We sent Reggie up for you, but he came down saying you had gone. We waited ten minutes, then, thinking you had lost your way, instituted a regular search, and I found you up in the old turret chamber, in a dead faint on the floor!"

I pulled myself together, and, as collectedly as I could, told him what had happened. He listened with incredulity and then said: "My dear Bruce, you have been dreaming!"

"Why?" I said, rather nettled, "how do you suppose I could have dreamt myself into that room? I tell you, Armitage, that I was as wide awake as you are, and am perfectly certain that what I saw was no dream."

"Well, then, the only other explanation is that you must have been screwed!"

"Really," I said, attempting to force a laugh, "I only left town at 4.30, and there's not much to be got out of a railway flask." Then, as he uttered a disbelieving "Hm-m," I added despondently, "I wish to goodness I could think I was."

"Look here," said Armitage seriously, "don't you go talking about this to anybody but me; of course there are stories about this house, as of every old house in England, but nobody has ever seen or imagined anything uncanny before, and it will frighten Mrs. Armitage to death if you tell her; she is awfully delicate, and I don't want to alarm her."

"All right," I said, "but I wish it hadn't happened to me; I feel frightfully shaky still."

"Oh, nonsense, come down to dinner; a good glass of champagne will set you to rights," said he.

Accordingly I made an effort to shake off the depression on my spirits and went down with him. The bright lights, cheerful talk, and clatter of plates, seemed terribly incongruous, and I am afraid pretty Miss Armitage must have thought me quite off my head, for I could eat nothing, drank feverishly, and replied at random to all her remarks and condolences, while the dead face of the murdered girl floated before my eyes and nearly distracted me.

"I'm afraid you don't feel at all well, Captain Bruce," she said at last. "Please don't think me dreadfully rude," I replied, "but if I could slip out unobserved I should be most grateful."

She signalled to Reggie, a bright-faced boy in an Eton jacket, whom I begged to show me upstairs, for the perturbation of my spirits were such that, though I felt awfully ashamed of myself, I literally dared not attempt to find my way up alone for fear of meeting my mysterious guide again.

The fire burned brightly in my room, the candles were lit, and it presented the same appearance of luxurious ease I had before observed. Reggie regarded me with round eyes of awe, evidently restrained only by his father's prohibition from deluging me with questions; I detained him as long as I could with trivial excuses, for a nervous horror of solitude began to possess me, but I saw he was anxious to be off again to his dinner, so I let him go.

I went to the glass—and recoiled: I hardly knew myself. My hair lay damply on my forehead, my face was very pale, and there was the haunted look in my eyes I had seen in his.

Very soon the door opened—I started nervously; but it was only the colonel with a steaming tumbler.

"Look here," he said, "just drink this off and get into bed, you'll be all right in the morning."

I did so, and the punch, which was, I suppose, a pretty stiff mixture, did send me off into a heavy dreamless sleep, which lasted till my blinds were drawn up by the servant in the morning letting in fresh sunshine, which speedily dispelled the illusions of the previous night—for illusions I was fain to believe them—in the face of the bright wintry landscape before me, and the cheery sounds of life in a country house which stole up to my ears through the echoing corridors.

A whole day in the saddle, and a splendid run, followed by a cosy game of billiards with Miss Mabel Armitage before dinner, decided me, ghosts or no ghosts, not to show myself ungrateful to my hosts by cutting short my visit as I had thought of doing when my first impressions were strung upon me.

And I found no reason to regret this decision when a most enjoyable ball was followed by another night or portion of a night of unbroken slumber.

The next day we spent in the covers, the ladies came out to give us luncheon, and I came home to dress for dinner in a most jubilant frame of mind, much inclined to put my fate to the touch with Miss Mabel; hoping that, be my deserts as small as they might, I should win, not "lose it all."

Some country neighbors were expected to dinner, and I was standing in a deep window-seat with Mabel and listening to her merry descriptions of them as they were ushered into the room by the stately butler—when "Sir George and Miss Hillyard" were announced, and there entered—dressed in white—the girl I had seen in my dream!

I stood transfixed, and Mabel exclaimed: "Oh, Captain Bruce, what is the matter?" But I could not answer.

Before my eyes rose again that darkened room, that funeral bed, and the lifeless form of her who now advanced towards me, led by Mrs. Armitage.

"Miss Hillyard, Captain Bruce." I bowed in a dream, but saw a look of surprise cross her face, and she glanced inquiringly at Mabel, who replied by a reassuring nod.

As soon as I could get an opportunity, I took Colonel Armitage aside, and whispered to him—"For heaven's sake, Armitage, am I mad? That is the girl."

He shook me impatiently by the shoulder and said, "'Pon my word, Bruce, I begin to think you are. That is one of the nicest girls I know. She's engaged to Lovett of the —th, and they are to be married soon after Easter. For goodness' sake don't go and frighten her by staring like a death's head."

"I can't take her down to dinner," I said. "I should be sure to make a fool of myself, somehow."

"Very well," he rejoined, "you can take in Mabel and I will arrange it."

So it was, but though I was some way from Miss Hildyard I couldn't help watching her and picturing how differently I had first seen her face.

I longed to confide in Mabel, but Colonel Armitage's injunction silenced me; and she, with gentle tact, forbore to remark my evident disturbance, and talked easily on indifferent subjects till I was able to collect myself.

Indeed, so charming was she that at last the demon of superstition was successfully exercised, and I could talk and laugh like anybody else.

After dinner I even ventured to accost Miss Hildyard, whom I found very agreeable, with nothing in the least supernatural about her; so once more I made up my mind that I was the victim of some extraordinary hallucination, and resolved to think of it no more.

Well—time passed; I was obliged to say good-bye to my kind friends with much regret (though it was tempered by a whispered assurance from Mabel that I might come and see her in London) and returned to my duties.

One day, soon after my return, I was driving down St. James' Street in a hansom with my young brother, when I discerned a figure in the distance walking before us which seemed familiar. The back only was visible, but somehow I knew that tall figure, those broad shoulders, that alert, regular stride.

As we passed he turned his face towards us and—good Heavens! it was he; my guide that terrible night at Medlicott. I could not be mistaken in those features, though they had lost the wild, hunted look I remembered so well.

Was I awake or dreaming?

I stopped the cab, to my brother's intense surprise, jumped out, with what intention I hardly know, and rapidly followed him. He turned up King Street and went into a house, opening the door with a latch-key, and shutting it behind him.

I remained hesitating—what should I do next? I decided on ringing the bell; it was answered by a decorous-looking manservant.

"What is the name of that gentleman who has just gone in here?"

"Mr. Lovett, sir, of the —th," was the reply. I felt stunned. Surely this was more than a coincidence!

The servant looked doubtfully at me. "Want to see him, sir?"

"N—no—" I stammered, quite unable to make up my mind.

Fortunately at this moment my hansom, which had followed me, came up, and I jumped in, leaving the man gazing after me. At that moment, in his opinion, I was clearly a suitable patient for Colney Hatch!

Now, what should I do? Should I call on Mr. Lovett, and speak to him, or should I warn Miss Hildyard? What proof had I, what right, a perfect stranger, to interfere with the private concerns of two people whom I had never even heard the names of before?

Besides, after all, what had I to tell? The dream of a disordered imagination! I should only be laughed at for my pains and treated with incredulity.

But, again, ought I to keep such an extraordinary occurrence from the knowledge of the two principal actors? I thought over this question till my brain reeled, and finding at last that every one to whom I dared confide either treated the facts as impossible or laughed me to scorn at the notion of thinking seriously of believing such a wildly imaginary case—as, of course, I could only put it hypothetically—I decided to let things take their course, and be guided by circumstances.

* * * * * *

A week or two passed. I had seen Mabel several times and at last had ventured on asking her that question on which all my happiness depended.

I need not describe here my joy at receiving the reply I longed for from the sweetest lips that ever breathed. I implored for a short engagement, and her mother being a tender-hearted old lady promised I should not have to wait long, and our marriage was settled to take place as soon after Easter as possible.

In the meantime I waited as patiently as might be, spending my time between business in London and flying visits to friends for hunting, etc., until a week before the day that I felt sure would secure my lifelong happiness.

One morning I received a note from some friends in the Isle of Wight asking me to come down for a ball at Ryde.

As I had nothing particular to do, and Mabel was away on a visit, I accepted the invitation and went down the same day.

I found my friends had taken rooms in the hotel, and were a large and lively party. In the evening the waiter came to me and asked, apologetically, if I would mind changing my room, which was a large one, for another, as they had received a telegram from a young married couple engaging a room for that night, and, owing to the pressure caused by the ball, all their rooms were full, with the exception of a small one next door to mine, which they asked me to take. Of course I consented to the change, and things were moved.

After the ball I came to bed at about

three o'clock in the morning, and was sitting by my open window smoking a cigarette and listening to the dull boom of the waves, in a half sleepy condition, when there seemed to come over me again that strange chill of fear I had felt once before.

My senses seemed preternaturally sharpened, and, above the gentle rush of the waves, I could hear somebody breathing in the next room. I listened intently —fearing I knew not what—the breathing came short, almost in gasps, and I heard stealthy movements.

The rest of the hotel was wrapped in sleep. I rose to my feet, feeling sure that something was wrong, when I heard a short struggle, a heavy fall, and a wild, piercing scream in a woman's voice, that haunts me still.

I rushed to the door, and was met on the threshold by—I knew it!—the man I had seen in my vision before.

He was in evening dress, much disordered, his shirt front and right arm were stained with blood, and in his right hand he grasped a razor, from which some ghastly drops still trickled. The light of insanity shone in his eyes, as, with a demoniacal shriek of laughter, he flung himself upon me.

Now began a most fearful struggle for life. The maniac seemed to have the strength of ten men, while the whole of my being seemed centred in an intense desire to rush past him to the next room, only the instinct of self-preservation causing me to hold by the arm in which he held his weapon.

However, I was soon reinforced by a hurrying crowd of servants and visitors, all in the most grotesque attire, with horror depicted on their faces.

He was dragged from me by main force and held down by many hands, while I burst open the next door and entered. Ah! A flood of remorse came over me as I recognized the scene I had feared, nay, knew I should see.

The moonlight pouring in at the window revealed to me the whole tragedy. There, half on, half off the bed lay that inanimate form, bloodstains all over the clothes and floor.

The people who had crowded in after me stood dumb, as in a sort of stupor. I approached the bed, and recognized the features of her whom I had known as Agnes Hilyard.

The rest of my story is soon told. I had to give evidence before the magistrates as to what I had seen, and the unfortunate Lovett, who had sunk into a state of insensibility, was removed to the nearest asylum pending the arrival of his friends.

I found that I had received in my struggle with him a severe wound in the shoulder, the loss of blood from which, acting upon a highly excited brain, caused a severe illness which confined me to my room for many weeks, during much of which time I was delirious.

When at last, much reduced in strength, and with my nerves considerably shattered, I crept out into the sunshine, I felt that my youth had left for ever.

I was ordered a long sea voyage, and my brave and loving Mabel insisted upon our immediate marriage, so that she could accompany and nurse me. To her unselfish care I owe, not only my life, but what was thought almost doubtful at one time, my reason; for the misery of regret I suffered, added to the horror of the events, preyed upon my nerves to such an extent that I was nearly sinking into a state of settled melancholia.

However, change of scene, and her bright and tender companionship acted like a charm, and before many months my health was re-established, but my haunting self-reproach can never be stilled.

Had it not been for my cowardly fear of ridicule, perchance this terrible tragedy might have been averted. Even if I had been looked upon as a visionary, it might have come to light that there was insanity in the Lovett family (as I have since learnt was the case), and the poor girl's relations might have delayed or even prevented the marriage.

Who knows? I cannot enter into the vexed question of psychics. All I know is, that these events happened to me exactly as I have written them down, and if I did not act upon them it was not because I had not been forewarned.

Dear Mr. Morton.

BY KATHARINE ROCHE.

"TOM'S widow is coming to tea this evening."

"My dear, don't speak of her in that way. Tom's widow! there is something ghastly in the very sound."

"You needn't be afraid, mother; she never shall be my widow."

"I thought you admired her, Tom," said Hilda.

"So I do, immensely; she's the jolliest little woman I know, but I mean to leave a different sort of widow."

"One whose appearance will be better adapted to weeds?"

"One who will show a little more feeling when I am gone," said Tom. "Mrs. Morton's husband can scarcely be a year dead, and yet she is the gayest and merriest of you all."

"Rose, just imagine Tom's ideal widow! A heart-broken creature, all crape and pocket-handkerchief, who will be for ever talking about her lost darling."

"My dear!" said my mother again.

"The mater thinks it unlucky to talk about my widow. How do you know that it is not I who am to be the bereaved one, bewailing the loss of my sainted wife, and expecting sympathy and consolation from my sisters?"

"Well," said Hilda after a few minutes' reverie, "I admit it does surprise me to see Freda Morton, loving and warm-hearted as she certainly is, appearing to feel the loss of her husband so little."

"Perhaps she disliked him."

"Rose! disliked 'dear Mr. Morton'!"

"Oh, that is merely a little conventional way of hers; she evidently considers it the correct phrase. It is quite compatible with indifference, if not dislike."

"I think she was fond of him," said Hilda. "She avoids speaking of him, as if it pained her to do so; sometimes even her voice seems to choke when she mentions him."

"And at other times she makes the most flippant remarks about him and his tastes and habits. She certainly is a puzzle."

"I am sorry you do not care for her, Tom; I often thought how pleasant it would be to have her as a sister-in-law."

"Your visions may be realized without victimizing me."

"Do you mean Edmund?"

"I do: I think Edmund is very much smitten, and that she knows it, and does not object."

"I never thought of that," said Hilda; "they never seem to speak to one another."

"No, but when either speaks to any one else, the other listens. Watch and you will see."

"I would rather she was married to you than to Edmund."

"Sorry I can't accommodate you. Good-bye, mother, I'm off."

"Are you coming home to tea, Tom?" asked my mother.

"Certainly, mother. I would not miss Mrs. Morton on any account."

Mrs. Morton and her sister, Mabel Heath, had now been settled in Longmede for some months. They brought letters from an old schoolfellow of Hilda's and mine, who was now married and living in Liverpool.

Mabel Heath and her sister were dear friends and neighbors of hers, she wrote, and she was very sorry to lose them, but they had no reason for remaining in Liverpool, and their means being diminished by their recent loss, they were anxious to find some quiet country place where they could live economically.

She had advised them to try Longmede, having heard much of it from Hilda and me, and feeling that she might trust to our kindness to make them welcome. The letter was hastily written, and seemed to take for granted that the circumstances of the sisters were already known to us.

However, this was Ethel Fordham's way; her letters generally were somewhat incoherent.

So Hilda and I went at once to call upon the new comers, whom we found established in pretty rooms in the house of the late doctor's widow, who had managed to retain her old home by letting part of it.

We were somewhat surprised to find both sisters mere girls, Mrs. Morton, although in reality the elder, appearing the younger of the two. They were in striking contrast to each other, Mrs. Morton being small, fair, and childish-looking, while Miss Heath was tall and somewhat stately, with dark hair and eyes.

Both wore deep mourning, Mrs. Morton's very becoming little cap constituting the chief difference in their dress.

We soon became very intimate with both girls. They refused our invitations at first, on the plea of their deep mourning, but after a little time they consented to come to tea, and later on to a quiet game of tennis. Mrs. Morton soon proved herself an excellent player, and she and Tom fraternized over the game.

Tom made no secret of his admiration for her, and Hilda and I soon decided that it would be very pleasant if Tom's widow, as we had begun to call her, were to become Tom's wife.

Now, however, Tom's manner, even more than his words, put an end to this castle in the air, leaving a new field of speculation in the suggestion he had thrown out concerning Edmund.

Edmund was a surgeon, and had been for some years on board ship. He was now at home, recovering from a somewhat severe illness, and looking for suitable employment on shore.

He was far quieter and more reserved than Tom, and the possibility of his being attracted by the pretty little widow had never occurred to any of us. Now, however enlightened by Tom's hint, we watched him closely, and before the close of the evening had discovered that Tom was right, and that Edmund was absorbed in studying her every movement, and listening to her every word; while she, on her part, was fully conscious of his admiration, and did not apparently dislike it. It was rather a disappointment to us, as we would have preferred her marrying Tom; however, we resigned ourselves to the inevitable, and began to speculate on the course of events, and make plans for Edmund's future, with Mrs. Morton as his wife.

One day not long after this we called at Mrs. Morton's lodgings, to ask her and Mabel Heath to join us in a walk.

The ladies were up-stairs, the servant said, and she asked us to wait in the drawing-room while she went to seek them. The drawing-room door was partly open, and we went in without any noise.

There was a deep bay window at one side of the room, looking into the garden; it was partly screened off by heavy curtains, and contained a writing-table and a couple of basket chairs.

We did not at first perceive that this recess was tenanted, but presently we saw, by means of the reflection in an opposite mirror, that Fredna Morton was standing by the table arranging the contents of her little writing-desk.

Presently she took up a small case, evidently containing a photograph, and looked long and earnestly at it. Then she raised it suddenly to her lips, and kissed it passionately many times.

Hilda and I waited breathlessly for a few moments; then I moved across the room, and greeted Winifred as though we had but just come in. She came forward to meet us, her radiant smiling self, although I could see there was no tears in her eyes. After a few minutes she went up-stairs to put on her bonnet, and to look for Mabel, and then Hilda and I stole over to the table on which we could still see the little case lying where Freda had put it down.

Our first feeling was surprise at seeing the photograph of a young man, having always supposed Mr. Morton to have been middle-aged, if not elderly.

Indeed, we had inferred as much from various little speeches made by the girls.

We were so absorbed in the contemplation of the photograph, that we did not perceive Mabel's entrance until she stood beside us.

"Oh!" she said, "so Freda has shown you that. Is he not a handsome man?"

"Very handsome," I said. "What a terrible grief his death must have been to Freda!"

An odd sort of a look came over Mabel's face. "People get over such things," she said, after a pause.

"Was he fond of Freda?"

"Exceedingly fond of her, and she o him. But here she is," as her step wa heard on the stairs. "Put down the picture Rose."

And Fredna came in, dressed for walking, in her coquettish little widow's bonnet.

"How cool and comfortable you girls look in your hats!" she said. "I think I must get one too, and leave off this horrid bonnet. I'm sure, dear, Mr. Morton would not like me to get sunburnt. Would he, Mab?"

"You know best," said Mabel shortly. "I certainly think you ought to get the hat," she added after a moment.

During the walk, Freda was the gayest of the gay, laughing and talking incessantly. As we parted from her at her own door, she said, "So Mabel tells me that you have seen my husband's picture. What do you think of him?"

I muttered some commonplace about the portrait, in the midst of which Freda suddenly snatched away her hand, which she had left in mine, and ran into the house.

One day my mother and I were sitting at work in the drawing-room, Edmund being seated, book in hand, in a low chair, which was partly concealed by a couple of tall palms. Suddenly Hilda burst into the room in a state of the wildest excitement.

"Mother, Rose—whom do you think I have seen just now at the post-office? Dear Mr. Morton."

"Do you mean his ghost?"

"I mean himself in the flesh—asking where Miss Heath lived. He has a pleasant voice."

"But, my dear," said my mother, "didn't he die? Die of an illness, I mean? Was he lost at sea, or anything of that sort?"

"I never heard particulars of his death," said Hilda, considering; "I believe he was a sailor, so probably he was lost at sea. Anyway, he is in Longmede at the present moment."

"How do you know it is he?"

"Rose and I once saw his photograph. I could not mistake him; he is a striking-looking man."

"Could this be his brother?"

"Don't you remember Freda's once telling us that she had no people-in-law? Besides, this man has a slight scar across his forehead, which I also noticed in the photograph. No, no, it is dear Mr. Morton. I wonder if Freda will be glad to see him!" she added significantly.

Then I suddenly remembered Edmund, and glanced in his direction. He was very pale, and the hand that held his book trembled.

When my mother and Hilda had left the room, he said—

"Rose, I shall go up to London to-night, and try if the berth that was offered to me on board the Venetia is still to be had. I wrote a refusal yesterday, but by going up to-night I may still secure it."

"Must you go, Edmund?"

"I cannot stay here," he said, "and I think life would be more endurable at sea than on shore. Come and help me with my packing, Rosie, there's a good girl."

Edmund went to town that night, in spite of his mother's remonstrances, and Hilda and I remained devoured by curiosity concerning Mr. Morton.

We debated as to whether it would be right to call, but disliked intruding. However, on the third day, having heard nothing, either of Mrs. Morton or her newly-found husband, we decided that it would be only kind to call, and were just setting out, when a ring came to the door, and in walked the two sisters, accompanied by the original of the photograph, the latter displaying a goodly length of limb in addition to the handsome bearded head with which we were already familiar.

Mrs. Morton was still in mourning, but she had discarded the widow's bonnet, and wore a small straw hat, similar to Mabel's. My mother went over to Freda, and kissed her affectionately, speaking some words of congratulation, and then turning to the stranger, greeted him also, addressing him as Mr. Morton.

"My name is Heath," he said, in a quiet, well-bred voice; and then Mabel, seeing the look of blank astonishment in my mother's face, struck in—

"Our brother, Mrs. Leslie. Just come home from Australia."

"Your brother! Winifred, my dear, I beg your pardon. I am sorry for having distressed you," for Freda was sobbing hysterically, with, it seemed to me, more laughter than tears in her voice.

"She is distressed because she is ashamed, Mrs. Leslie," said Mr. Heath. "I have come here to-day to insist upon both my sisters making full acknowledgment of the deception they had practiced upon your family, and to beg that you will kindly make it known to any one whom it may concern."

"Deception?"

"Winifred's passing herself off as a widow. She is not married."

"Not married! then Mr. Morton——"

"Is a myth. The girls fancied, I believe, that living alone they would have more freedom if one of them were a widow, and Winifred, being already in mourning for my grandfather, whose recent death had left them homeless, bought a widow's cap, and called herself Mrs. Morton. The false position once assumed was not easily abandoned, although it led them into more absolute deceit than they had at first foreseen. They now wish to explain the matter to you as their chief friend in Longmede, and to ask your pardon for having deceived you."

"The deception has affected us much," said my mother. "Your sister would have been quite as welcome here under her true name. How did such a plan enter your head, Winifred—what suggested it to you?"

"It was only on our way through London that I thought of it," said Freda. "Mabel and I went into Jay's to buy hats, and while we were choosing them, I saw a little widow's bonnet on the table, and I tried it on. It suited me exactly, and Mabel said, 'What a pity you are not really a widow, Freda! you look so nice in weeds, and if you were, we should both be far more independent than we can be as young ladies.' The idea of pretending to be a widow came into my mind then, and I thought it would be good fun. Mabel did not like it, but I made her consent. We bought a widow's cap and bonnet; we were already in mourning for grandfather, and I determined to call myself Morton. It really is my name—Winifred Morton Heath. We talked so much to each other about Mr. Morton, that we came half to believe in him. We did not understand at first how difficult it would be to keep up the pretence, or how many lies we should have to tell. I was many a time longing to tell you the truth, but I was afraid."

"I am sorry you did not, my dear," said my mother gravely. "However, that cannot be helped now. Did you expect your brother?"

"No, not at all. His coming was quite a surprise. He walked suddenly into the drawing-room, and found me in a widow's cap"—she laughed somewhat hysterically. "You must have been startled, Mr. Heath?"

"I was startled at first," he said, "and when I learned the truth I was shocked. I did not think either of my sisters would have been capable of such systematic deceit. I was determined that I at least would be no party to it. This visit is also to say good-bye, Mrs. Leslie," he added. "My sisters accompany me to London this evening. They will scarcely find Longmede a pleasant residence, once the truth is known. I am remaining in England for a year, and for that time, at least, they are better with me. I cannot understand," he added, "why you were so ready to assume that I was—the late Mr. Morton," with an expression that made him for the moment like Freda.

"We saw your photograph," I said hesitatingly.

"Did she show me as Morton?" he asked, his face darkening.

"Mabel did."

"I beg your pardon," said Mabel's grave voice. "You assumed that the portrait was that of Freda's husband, and I did not contradict you. You were very much struck by the photograph, I remember, and rather scandalized at Freda's having survived her loss."

It was now my turn to look confused under the amused scrutiny of Mr. Heath's brown eyes.

The Heaths soon after went away, leaving Hilda and me much saddened, both by their departure and by the manner of it.

"Poor Edmund!" I said, "what a pity that he was in such a hurry! I must write and tell him the truth. Perhaps he has not yet finally arranged to sail in the Venetia."

"My dear," said my mother very energetically, "I would rather a thousand times that he sailed in the Venetia than that he married that deceitful girl. Her conduct shows a want of honor and principle such as I should be sorry to see in Edmund's wife."

Nevertheless, I thought it due to Edmund to let him know the state of affairs. The only notice he took of the communication was a postscript in his next letter to my mother: "Tell Rose I received hers of the 22nd."

We heard nothing of the Heaths after they left Longmede.

In the surprise and confusion of our parting, we had forgotten to ask them to keep us informed of their movements, while they probably felt chary of writing under the circumstances.

At the end of the year Edmund came home, looking older and browner, his

quiet reserved manner suiting him better now than it did in his more boyish days. He had bought a practice in a little town on the south coast, and intended settling there. The first time he and I were alone he asked if I knew anything of the Heaths. I was somewhat ashamed to confess that I did not.

"You and Hilda imagined yourselves attached to those girls, I believe."

"So we were, but mother was so much annoyed at the deceit——"

"A mere bit of childish masquerading undertaken without considering the consequences. I do not know how you can call it by such a harsh name as deceit."

"I have often felt sorry since that we did not ask their address. Do you think you could find it out, Edmund?"

"I have found it out. I met Australian friends of Heath's on board ship, who gave it to me."

"Have you seen them?"

"Not yet. I came first to my mother."

"Give me the address, and I will write to Freda."

"As you did without news of them for so long, you can exist without it a little longer. You shall have the address soon."

Edmund went away in a day or two on business, and about a week later there came a letter announcing his engagement to Miss Heath.

Poor mother was in great trouble at the news, and we had considerable difficulty in concealing from her our look upon the former [illegible] as an [illegible] of intimate depravity.

A little before the wedding, I went to [illegible] with the Heaths at Kensington. Freda was looking pale and thin, but very [illegible].

"Rosie," she said, as soon as she had got me into a corner by ourselves, "I have been punished for my deceit all through the past year."

"Punished?"

"I have been so unhappy. I thought he was as distasted with me as the rest of you, and that I should never see him again."

"Then you loved him all the time?"

"Yes. I used to think that I could never care for any one as much as I did for Rupert, and now Mabel is going with Rupert, and I am staying behind."

My mother did not go to Edmund's wedding; but she was very kind and affectionate to Freda, when the young people came to stay at Longmede. She confided to me, however, that she could never look at her daughter-in-law without regretting the widow's cap in which she had first seen her.

"It seems to me an omen," she said. "[illegible] many years ago, however, and [illegible] the widow's cap has as yet fallen on Freda's golden head.

The gold is still undimmed, I believe, but this I only know from hearsay, not having seen my sister-in-law since the day on which I, Rose Heath, sailed from Southampton with Mabel and her brother.

Only a Convict.

BY T. CASSELL.

BANG! bang! bang!

There was a patter of feet along the dusty road.

The senora looked up from her sewing just in time to see a young man, clad in the coarse garb of a convict, rush into the little summer house where she was sitting.

"Save me!" cried the panting fugitive. "My life is at stake!"

One glance at the man's face decided the lady. She heard the steps of the pursuers.

"Under here! Quick!" was her imperious order.

Jose Garcia, in spite of his alarm, could not restrain a smile.

But it was no time to hesitate. Without a word he crawled under the folds of the light fabric on which the lady was plying her needle, and which rippled over her lap piled up at her feet.

Sitting with his back against the senora's knees, the convict was securely concealed from view.

It was not a moment too soon. An officer, with a squad of soldiers, appeared at the door of the summer house.

"The convict, senora; did you see him?" inquired the officer, breathlessly.

"I heard shots, and the footsteps of some one running rapidly," replied the lady. "By all means search the place before you leave."

With effusive thanks, the officer at once proceeded to search the grounds, and the senora's house was also subjected to a close scrutiny.

"Again I thank you," said the commander of the squad, approaching the summer house; "but the villain is not here, and we must be off in a hurry."

He waved his hand gracefully and disappeared with the soldiers down the road.

Jose Garcia emerged from under his protecting cover.

He was a man of small stature, singularly active and wiry, and his face might [illegible] been called handsome. It certainly did not look like a convict's face.

"Senora, you have saved my life," he said in a voice of deep emotion.

"Then I am very glad," answered the lady. "Perhaps I was wrong, but I could not see you hunted down and shot like a wild beast."

She looked at his costume and shuddered.

"[illegible] you are a very bad man," she said [illegible], "or they would not have tried to [illegible] you. But I wanted to give you a chance. I hope you will get away, [illegible] for me, to try to [illegible] from [illegible]."

[illegible], with a low laugh. His head [illegible] [illegible] the lady's

completely. He noted her pale face with the lines of suffering round the eyes. Then he looked at her black costume.

"The senora is a widow," he said, pityingly; "I trust that she has good friends. She deserves them."

"Oh, no," was the hasty reply. "My husband lives. He is Dr. Miramon," and she drew herself up proudly. "I wear black," she resumed, "because he is a prisoner, and there is no hope that he will ever be restored to me. But he wears no convict stripes. His offence was political. You may have heard of his pamphlet."

Jose Garcia had heard of it. He knew that Dr. Miramon had been arrested because he had written against the Government.

"This little place," said the senora, "is not mine. I rent it and live here with two old servants, who are devoted to me. But for them there would be nothing in store for me but starvation. It makes little difference, perhaps, as my husband's health is giving way under his cruel confinement, and his death will be the signal for mine."

The shades of evening were falling, and the lady gathered up her work with the evident intention of going to the house.

"If I can ever help you, senora," said the convict, earnestly, "I will at any cost. Ten thousand thanks for your kindness. Adios!"

And Jose Garcia darted across the road, taking good care not to head in the direction of Havana, only a mile or so away.

When morning dawned Garcia found himself at the cabin of one of his old companions in crime. He entered boldly and was heartily welcomed and provided with a breakfast and a change of garments.

Although a robber like Garcia, the dweller in the cabin was true to his friends, and in some things was honest to a fault.

When Gomez heard the story of Garcia's escape he opened his eyes with an exclamation of astonishment.

"I am sorry for the good senora," he said.

"Her husband is a clever man. He was sentenced to pay a fine of $10,000 or be imprisoned for ten years. He cannot pay the fine, and he will die in less than a year."

Garcia scratched his head and looked [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Our Young Folks.

MASTER TROT.

BY L. E.

NOW, Master Trot, take this hat-box and be off like a shot.

"Ay! and that's poetry, Mr. Fisher."

"Never mind whether it is poetry or not; you make haste, and be off like a shot," persisted the rhyming-tongued shopman, in haughty disdain, as Master Trot—or James Jones, as his parents called him—put on his cap lazily, and prepared for action: he being errand boy and running footman in general to Messrs. Hardy & Son, hatters, in Slowbridge.

"Do you know legs ain't always willin' to carry folk along like shots, Mr. Fisher?" questioned that notable.

"Well, willing or not, yours'll have to carry you that way to-day, as they're wanted to be off in another direction when this dance is over, and in double quick time, too!"

"They'll never do it; nature'll never stand it," averred Master Trot.

"Well, we shall see," spoke the shopman, with the air of an oracle, and retired to his counter and his work, while James Jones sallied forth.

"Ay, double quick time, that's the tune all the day long," grumbled he. "I may as well be a slave, only there's the lash; and I can change when I like." And thus communing with himself, he hung the box on his arm by the string, thrust his hands into his pockets, and whistled his way leisurely along, his feet keeping time with his whistling. Nay, once turning the corner, his pace became so like that of a snail, that one wag of a lad meeting him; put the question, "Has a snail overtaken you this morning, dear sir?"

To which he made answer:

"No; snails ain't so silly as I, to put their best foot in front like I'm doin'." Whereupon his questioner winked and walked on; and Jones smiled knowingly, for, be it known, he was, like many of his fellow mortals, an eye-server who could smile over it, and thought no harm done.

"Well, where are you off to in such hot haste?" was the question which greeted him in Poplar Walk from a lad of his own age, amusing himself with a retriever dog.

"Didn't know I was in hot haste," was the laconic reply. "I didn't mean to be hurryin'; ain't gentlemanly, you know."

"Oh! do you go in for that little game? Now I thought you were doing the double quick trot."

"I was told to; I ain't goin' to, and I wish swells'd carry home their own hats when they'd bought them!"

"Oh, ay! but if they did where would you be?"

"Oh! I expect I should be where other folk'd be if everybody did their own work themselves."

"A jolly world 'twould be, I'm thinking; but I doubt if 'twould not be harder lines for some of us, for how should we cobble our clothes together?" questioned the lad with the dog, like a minute philosopher.

"Well, I wasn't lookin' on the thing in that light—but where did you get your dog?" asked James Jones, as if glad to turn from the knotty question.

"Bought him of Mr. Barton—at least, father did—and a clever chap he is too!"

"Your father or the dog?"

"Why, the dog, silly; there isn't a trick he isn't up to—scarce."

"Is that so you say!"

"Well, see for yourself. Now, Shag, at it, old man," and up went a ball from the young master's hand, which Shag dexterously caught in his mouth as it descended, and laid the hat at the thrower's feet, waiting for further orders, to all appearance as well pleased with the fun as those who made him amusing.

"I wager an hour's time that he isn't half so clever as Long I know up at Mr. Hardy's," said the loiterer, putting down his box and beginning to fold up his hood.

"What now will you pay in that coin if you lose?" asked the other. "And how shall I get my due if I win?"

"Wait till you win, and then——" James Jones nodded his head and grinned, instead of finishing his sentence.

"But now about the dog himself," said the other.

"Ay, about the dog. Let's see some of his antics," spoke Master Trot. "You see, I'm supposed to be in a hurry."

"Ay, looks like it," quoth the dog's master, dryly.

But he began to put the great, doddle, compliant creature through his tricks, sending him leaping into the air, cutting unheard of somersaults while there, then he knelt like a supplicant, begging and looking as if he only needed a long coat and beard to make him look like a Capuchin friar. At the time Trot's legs burned and ignored, and it did not try to carry him along one whit.

"Well, you don't beat," confessed James Jones, when Shag came to a stand-still to look proud.

"He'n't seen the half of it yet; he's as full of tricks as a monkey," averred Harry Long, as we'd got as well call him, for they were near time, and away went he and Shag, arm-in-arm like, down the walk, where the pop-sticks were burnt in the sunshine, the dog leaping round and round the ball fell from his master's hand, as if perfectly fascinated.

As for James Jones, he sauntered behind, with his box on his arm again, taking in all the fun that he dare—he who had been admonished to be quick.

"Mr. Hardy's dog'd beat him hollow," came wandering down the walk from him, like a perverse echo, to Long and the romping dog.

"Ah! you haven't seen all his tricks yet," laughed Long, as with inward mirth.

"I say, Mr. Hardy's dog and any dog could jump after a ball," came echoing again from him, as on the wind, from saun[illegible] James [illegible], you don't half throw [illegible] me."

But Long said, no; he should keep and throw his own ball, and show off his own dog; and so he did, Shag growing wilder and more waggishly romping every moment.

Ay, the moments were flying; those precious atoms of time which were to form that wager hour, to be lost or won by a prankish dog.

"He ha'n't done nothing wonderful yet" cried Jones disdainfully from afar.

"That's no reason why he won't," said Long, as if he knew what would happen by-and-by.

"I still say Hardy's dog'd beat him hollow," came like a taunt from Trot.

"Wait, you only wait; he ha'n't half come to the end of his tether or funny tricks," returned hopeful Long. "He'll astonish you yet, I can tell you."

"Make haste then," shouted the other, and coming helter-skelter on to the scene of action. Such long, unwieldy legs the boy had, such a grotesque grey shadow went with him as he ran.

Yes, ran; Master Trot's legs could be nimble enough when fun prompted them, as now.

Ah, Master Trot! Master Trot!

Now, as fortune would have it, he held the long desired ball in his own hand, now tossing it here and there, [illegible] creature, leaping and turning head over heels on the grass [illegible] return it, and fast growing beyond all control. Still the errand boy cried:

"He ain't worth his salt 'side of Hardy's dog"

And now the ball was in Long's hands again.

"Not worth his salt beside of Hardy's dog, ain't he?—we'll see," grinned Long.

"Now then, Shag, for the tug of war."

"Make haste, then, and do your best," for I must run for it, or I shall catch it, said Jones, suddenly becoming conscious that he had been idling, and getting his long legs into action. Whereupon Long shouted from behind:

"Now for the master trick. Now, Shag, do your best," and threw the ball at random, as he affirmed afterwards. But he threw it right athwart Master Trot's path, where his clumsy legs were darting, athwart the track of the laughing summerset, Shag following, swift as deed after thought.

One would have supposed the two—Jones and the dog—were leaping after a prize, to watch them.

Ha! ha! ha! was ever anything so funny?

Shag darted, just at the wrong moment, just before those swiftly flying legs; neither could help what happened; it was all so sudden, so unexpected, so ludicrous; very like two swift trains they came into contact—there was a collision. Shag howled in comic alarm, and the kicks from those flying feet, suddenly brought to a standstill, were so sharp.

Nay, down fell Master Trot, helter-skelter, falling, falling; now he, Shag, and the hat-box were rolling over together, Long meanwhile standing afar, and shaking his sides with [illegible] The very winds seemed to take up the uproar [illegible] and to waft it on to the [illegible]

"Well, could Hardy's dog [illegible]" shouted he, as Jones and Shag went [illegible] Shag went leaping [illegible] a laughing matter, not at [illegible] may be, but with a wager.

"No, Hardy's dog was'n such a brute," growled he roughly.

"How do you mean?" came the question.

"He's made me knock my knees, scratch my hands almost to pieces, and—and——" Jones's eyes and mouth opened wide with horror.

Ah! the poor hat-box; a sorry sight indeed was the poor hat-box, when its guardian's scattered wits allowed him to take in the aspect of affairs. A poor, crumpled-up affair it looked—and what of the hat it contained? What were scratched hands or knocked knees compared to this dire misfortune?

"Never mind about the box so long as the hat's all right," shouted Long, as in comic sympathy.

Well, the hat was a more woe-begone thing than the box when poor Master Trot drew it therefrom into the light.

Ah! if he had made good his name, and trotted fast and faithfully home with it—ah! if he had!

"It do look queer," quoth he, for more heroic words failed him; he felt as crushed as the hat; and the half of his misery was still to come when he presented himself at Messrs. Hardy & Son's with that poor, depressed-looking head-gear.

"People ha'n't no business to want boys to carry home their hats," muttered he; but conscience was whispering something very different from that.

"Well, you've lost your wager, old fellow," shouted provoking Long. "An hour's good time lost for running and wiping it how was, I to [illegible]"

"Don't bother me about pay!' when there's so much to be paid besides," howled the unfaithful errand boy, losing heart, and melting into unavailing tears.

"Well, you must confess Shag is no common dog," persisted his tormentor; "but I didn't know of that last crowning trick myself—it came all permiscuous, as the learned ones would say."

"You did it on purpose to get me into a scrape," cried Master Trot, in a fearful heat of temper.

"Not as a gentleman I say no."

"You didn't try to stop it," shouted Trot.

"Did you? I say, when folk consent to carry home other folk's hats they oughtn't to loiter, making wagers over dogs' tricks and dogs' antics; and then they wouldn't fall into hat-boxes and squash hats."

After delivering this homily Long coolly walked off, and out of the affair, his dog at his heels, leaving poor James Jones in a very sorry plight indeed, with the battered hat still in his hands.

How should he appease his masters, Hardy & Son?—to face the owner of the hat he could not!

"Have you crushed somebody's hat?" piped a silvery voice at his side—a dainty-faced mite of a girl, pausing to look at him.

"Yes, miss"—a very shame-faced "Yes, miss" it was too.

"And are you sorry?"

"I 'spect I be; and more'n that, miss, I'm afraid."

"Afraid! a boy afraid!—how funny!" piped the silvery voice.

"Taint funny to be afraid of being turned off, is it?" said he, not realising her surprise.

"Ask them to forgive you," was the wholesome advice given by James Jones's little friend.

"I'm afraid to do that; besides, I know they won't."

"Shall I ask for you? 'cause I'm not afraid—girls aren't, you know; we're little, but we are not afraid—not very."

"Would ye ask for me, little lady?" The offer came like a gleam of hope to the by no means valiant one.

"Yes; whom shall I ask?" said she.

"I'll show ye;" and hand in hand Master Trot and the little maid set forth on their way.

"Why, this is my papa's shop, and I shall have to ask papa not to turn you away!" cried the small mediator, as Master Trot led her in at the shop-door.

Ah, well, he did not lose his place then, but it got abroad, and Harry Long heard it, that Master Trot was saved by a girl; and Trot had to bear the taunts of his old companions as best he could, and, what is more, grew to be the most prompt of prompt and trustworthy errand boys in the town—so no matter it he were saved by a girl.

ROBIN'S REWARD.

BY A. S. PENN.

IT was no wonder that Robin had thought of nothing else but the school treat for weeks. There were to be swinging boats, a steam circus, games of all kinds, tea, bread-and-butter, and cake, all in a beautiful field full of trees and flowers.

Robin had never been to anything of the kind in his life.

He was only four, and at first his mother had said he was too young to go; but Miss Pollock, at the Vicarage, whom Robin called "teacher," had talked to his mother about it, and had promised to take care of him herself, and see that he came to no harm.

"Why don't you eat your bread-and-milk, Robin?" asked his mother on the morning of the day that he had been looking out for so long.

"I'm not hungry," he said.

"I shan't let you go if you don't have your proper food first. You won't get much in the field among all those big children."

The little boy set to work then, and took his bread-and-milk as though it had been medicine he was ready to take as much as it was wanted, to get it over.

The time was getting so near now, and he was terribly afraid something would happen so that he should not go after all.

But nothing happened all the morning, and just before dinner his mother put on her own hat, so that he should be ready to start at two.

"Eat a good dinner, Robbie," said she.

Robin sighed, but did his best. He was just gulping down the last mouthful of rice pudding when his mother said—

"There!"

He dropped his spoon and looked up at her, with his round blue eyes opened wider than usual.

"It it hasn't come on to rain!" cried his mother. "Just look at that! I can't let you go in the rain, that's certain."

Robin slipped down from his chair and went to the window. There were the raindrops pattering down fast, and the sky, which had been clear and blue in the [illegible] was [illegible] with [illegible]

"Never mind, dearie," said his mother, [illegible] kissing the top of [illegible] head. "You shall have some other treat instead."

Then she bustled away to attend to the baby, who had just turned round in his cradle, and was beginning to cry, as a hint that he too wanted his dinner.

Robin stood still by the window, and tried to look out, but he could not see anything, for his eyes had filled up with tears, and now there were drops pattering down all over the front of his clean frock.

The great swinging pendulum of the clock on the wall went steadily on "tick, tock," and Robin knew that the time was [illegible] fast.

And still the rain poured down. He dried his eyes and watched it, trying to think that it was just going to stop, but as soon as he made up his mind that it was growing less it came on in bigger drops than before.

At last he turned away and sat down on the floor. He was just opening his mouth for a good scream to relieve his feelings when he saw that his mother was rocking the baby off to sleep again, and he succeeded in stopping himself, and only cried quietly as he had before.

A few minutes after a neighbor came in for a moment and spoke to his mother, who said, "Very well. I'll be there directly," and hurriedly put on her bonnet and shawl.

"Robin," she said, as she tied the strings of her bonnet, "old Mrs. Turner's very ill, and they want me to go and help them a bit, so you must take care of baby till I come back."

"Yes, mother," he answered, in a voice that trembled a little. That took away his last hope.

When they were alone his baby brother began to whimper, and turn himself about restlessly.

Robin sat down on a little chair by the cradle side, and rocked it gently, while his tears kept falling one after another, pat, pat, pat, on his frock, taking out all the starch.

Poor Robin! He had never been so miserable before in all the four years of his life.

After a while, as baby did not move, he left off rocking, and leaned his head against the back of the chair. Everything was so quiet that in a short time he had cried himself right off to sleep.

He was dreaming of being in the field with the rest, and was scrambling with other children for sweets, as he had heard they did at the treat last year, when some sound made him open his eyes.

And there was Miss Pollock standing before him with a smile on her face, and the sun shining on her white dress and yellow hair.

"Wake up, Robin!" she said. "I've come to fetch you."

"Oh, [illegible] her!" he said, breathlessly, "I'm minding baby."

"We can [illegible] get over that difficulty," she answered, laughing; and in [illegible] minute she had the baby, out of the cradle, and on her knee, where he sat staring and sucking his thumb.

"Don't look so startled, Robin," said teacher, smiling again. "I met your mother as I came, and we arranged that I should take care of you. There's baby and the [illegible] I've got in my basket, and the [illegible] hat, and we'll have a [illegible] time."

And before he had quite made up his mind whether he were not still asleep and dreaming, Miss Pollock had got them both ready, had locked up the cottage and given the key to the woman next door, and was walking up the road with the baby in her arms, and Robin trotting by her side.

"And did you enjoy it, Robbie?" asked his mother, when she tucked him up in bed that night.

"Oh, it was lovely!" he answered sleepily.

She gave him an extra kiss.

"Well, you deserved it, dearie," she said, "for being so patient."

RUSSIAN MATCH MAKING.—Russian girls of marriageable age and women of respectability are very seldom seen upon the streets alone. Generally a male servant follows in close proximity. Should a boy or a man see a girl or woman he admires he makes post-haste to an ambassador, employs him, and marriage negotiations begin.

It is the business of the negotiator to represent to the parents and the girl the good qualities of the young man; to show his ability, fine appearance and business worth to their best advantage. He generally pleads his case well. Seldom is time given for consideration. If [illegible] persons, [illegible] the [illegible] and they [illegible] promptly, the offer [illegible] If [illegible] the [illegible] of the ambassador [illegible] force the young man [illegible] to [illegible] date and perhaps [illegible] before this [illegible] any persons present to [illegible] the betrothal of the young lady, the young man and his [illegible] No announcement of the match is made. Not until the wedding knot is tied does the glib ambassador get his pay. It then depends upon the station of the parties to the match, the sternness and intricacy of the case and the liberality of the client. Sometimes both parties make him presents. Usually he profits to about the same extent as the prosecuting lawyer in the United States when he gets a divorce proceeding through.

THE IDEAL HAM.—"Why is it we cannot buy now the sweet, old-fashioned country ham?" wails a poetic gourmand in a Southern paper. "Judge Lumpkin lately sent to the writer a half-dozen from his private smoke-house, of the vintage of 1884, that are simply poems in ashes. Any self-respecting pig would have died gladly to have been so idealized. In these hams you catch the flavor of the smoke of the half-smothered oak chips above which they drifted with the seasons into perfection.

"And the red gravy (excuse these drooling lips), clear, consistent, flavorous—it is not a gravy as you used to find [illegible] mother's table when you were [illegible] a long [illegible] in the [illegible] I [illegible] rather have a [illegible] with its [illegible] than [illegible] pepper pods, its [illegible] and [illegible] of sage, and [illegible] Mahometa—than a cellar of dust-begrimed bottles of Madeira of '23.

"Has the art of curing hams in the Georgia smoke-house become a lost one? Shall red gravy go, with Tyrian purple, into the realms of the impossible?"

SOME DAY OF DAYS.

Some day, some day of days, threading the street,
With idle, heedless pace,
Unlooking for such grace,
I shall behold your face!
Some day, some day of days, thus we may meet.

Perchance the sun may shine from skies of May,
Or Winter's icy chill
Touch whitely vale and hill.
What matter? I shall thrill
Through every vein with summer on that day.

Once more life's perfect youth will all come back,
And for a moment there
I shall stand fresh and fair,
And drop the garment care;
Once more my perfect youth shall nothing lack.

I shut my eyes now, thinking how 't will be,
How, face to face, each soul
Will slip its long control,
Forget the dismal dole
Of dreary fate's dark, separating sea.

And glance to glance, and hand to hand in greeting,
The past, with all its fears,
The silence and its tears,
Its lonely, yearning years,
Shall vanish in the moment of that meeting.

A BUDGET OF PARADOXES.

There exists, floating about the world in a verbal form, and occasionally even appearing in print, a certain class of Propositions or Queries, of which the object is to puzzle the wits of the unwary listener, or to beguile him into giving an absurd reply. Many of these are very old, and some are excellent.

Who, for example, has not, at some period of his existence, been asked the following question: "If a goose weighs 10 lbs. and half its own weight, what is the weight of the goose?" And who has not been tempted to reply on the instant, 15 lbs.? The correct answer being, of course, 20 lbs.

Indeed, it is astonishing what a very simple query will sometimes catch a wise man napping. Even the following have been known to succeed:

"How many days would it take to cut up a piece of cloth 50 yards long, one yard being cut off every day?

Or again:

"A snail climbing up a post 20 feet high, ascends 5 feet every day, and slips down 4 feet every night. How long will the snail take to reach the top of the post?"

Or again:

"A wise man having a window one yard high, and one yard wide, and requiring more light, enlarged his window to twice its former size; yet the window was still only one yard high and one yard wide. How was this done?"

This is a catch-question in geometry, as the preceding were catch questions in arithmetic—the window being diamond-shaped at first, and afterwards made square.

As to the two former, perhaps it is scarcely necessary seriously to point out that the answer to the first is not 50 days, but 49; and to the second, not 20 days, but 16—since the snail, who gains one foot each day for 15 days, climbs on the 16th day to the top of the pole, and there remains.

Such examples are plentiful, and occasionally both curious and amusing.

But there are certain problems which are in no way catch questions, and which though at first sight extremely simple, often require considerable ingenuity to arrive at a correct result. Take for example the following:

"A man walks round a pole, on the top of which is a monkey. As the man moves, the monkey turns round on the top of the pole so as to still keep face to face with the man. Query, when the man has gone round the pole, has he, or has he not, gone round the monkey?"

The answer which will occur at first sight to most persons is that the man has not gone round the monkey, since he has never been behind it. The correct answer, however, as decided by a leading science publication, in the pages of which this momentous question has been argued, is that the man has gone round the monkey in going round the pole.

The following was once asked at a university wine-party:

"Suppose three snakes, each of which is swallowing another by the tail, so that the three form a circle—then, as the swallowing process continues the circle evidently grows smaller and smaller. Now, if they thus continue to swallow each other, what will eventually become of the snakes?"

Of course it is clear that either the swallowing process must stop somewhere, or that the snakes will vanish down each other's throats. At what point, then, will the swallowing cease?

If the reader finds himself ready on the spot with a clear and precise answer to this question he will have proved himself of a readier wit than the guests of the above mentioned wine-party. A little consideration, however, will probably be sufficient to clear up the mystery, and the problem may safely be left to the examination of the ingenious.

A paradox familiar to the Greeks—that of Achilles and the tortoise—is well known. Achilles (the swift-footed) allows the tortoise a hundred yards start, and runs ten yards while the tortoise runs one. Now, when Achilles has run a hundred yards the tortoise has run one yard, and is, therefore, still that distance ahead. When Achilles has run these ten yards, the tortoise has run one yard. When Achilles has run the one yard, the tortoise has run one-tenth of a yard. And when Achilles has run the one tenth of a yard, the tortoise has run one-hundredth. It is only necessary to continue the same process of reasoning to prove that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise.

A much better paradox, though somewhat of the same kind, runs as follows: "A man, who owes a shilling, proceeds to pay it at the rate of sixpence the first day, threepence the next day, three-farthings the next, and so on—paying each day half the sum he paid the day before. Supposing him to be furnished with counters of small value, so as to be able readily to pay fractions of a penny, how long would it take him to pay the shilling?" The answer is that he would never pay it. It is true that he will pay elevenpence-farthing in four days. But the remaining three farthings he can never pay.

This paradox differs from the preceding in one important particular, and deserves to be called a better paradox for this reason, that we know that Achilles, in spite of all reasoning, will certainly overtake the tortoise. But it is mathematically demonstrable that the debtor, under such circumstances, can never pay his shilling, even though he should be endued with the gift of immortality.

"If Dick's father is Tom's son what relation is Dick to Tom?"

This familiar query is too obvious of solution to deserve more than passing mention. The following, however, of the same class, will be found very much more fatal. A man standing before a portrait says of it:

"Sisters and brothers have I none—
Yet that man's father is my father's son."

What relation is the speaker to the person depicted in the portrait? It is quite remarkable how often the answer is given, that the portrait represents the speaker himself. As a matter of fact it represents the speaker's son.

"There is a spot on the earth's surface from which, if any number of men set out to walk in different directions, all would be walking towards the same point of the compass. What is that spot?" It will not need any very prolonged reflection to discover that the point in question is the North Pole. It will, in fact, be evident, that a man standing at the Pole, in whatever direction he sets out, must, as long as he proceeds in a straight line, walk due South.

Grains of Gold.

A wicked man is afraid of his own memory.

Where passion is high, there reason is low.

The way to avoid great faults is to beware of less.

A man that breaks his word bids others be false to him.

The maintaining of one vice costeth more than ten virtues.

He that knows nothing knows enough, if he knows how to be silent.

He who builds according to every man's advice will have a crooked house.

Be content to do the things you can, and fret not because you cannot do everything.

Inclination never wants for an excuse; if one won't do, there are a dozen others at hand.

Time well employed is Satan's deadliest foe; it leaves no opening for the lurking fiend.

The seeds of repentance are sown in youth by pleasure, but the harvest is reaped in old age by pain.

Femininities.

Fringes made of ostrich feathers are noted upon dressy wraps.

Large charity doth never soil, but only whitens soft white hands.

There are lots of men in this world born to rule, but their wives get there all the same.

New explosives are being discovered daily, but powder is still good enough for the ladies.

A paper advertises for "A first-class riding horse for a lady that is young and gentle and easy to manage."

A woman's scorn is something not to be trifled with. Especially when you step on it in a crowded street car.

It is as uncomfortable to feel like scolding and have nothing to scold about, as it is to be hungry and have nothing to eat.

There are two sorts of information that are seldom pleasing or acceptable—when you tell a man of his faults or a woman of her age.

Son: "Papa, how do they catch lunatics?" Cynical father: "With diamond necklaces, decollete dresses and fourteen-button gloves, my dear boy."

The truly helpful wife is the one who always returns her husband's pencil when she borrows it. She has not been born yet. So says a cynical editor.

Ada: "Why, one of your cheeks is red as fire and the other pale as that of a ghost." Ella: "Yes; Harry was on one side, and I was afraid that mamma would see us on the other."

Turpentine and black varnish put with any good stove polish is the blacking used by hardware dealers for polishing heating stoves. If properly put on it will last throughout a season.

Teacher: "Have animals a capacity for affection?" Class: "Nearly all." Teacher: "Correct. Now, what animal possesses the greatest attachment for man?" Little girl: "Woman."

Before you oppose your husband in any important matter be very sure you are not biassed by any selfish motive—that you are defending a moral principle, and not a prejudice or fancy of your own.

"What is the size of that shoe?" "No. 2, madam." "I thought so. It fits perfectly." The clerk looks again. "Excuse me, madam; it is a 4." "A 4! Dear me, it is two sizes too big. Take it right off."

A Nashville woman died happy. She was taken sick just after she had purchased a perfect love of a bonnet, and on her deathbed she was given the blessed assurance that it should be buried with her. It was.

She, just through playing: "I fear, Mr. Squiggles, my music is too poor to give you enjoyment." He, assuringly: "O, indeed, I do enjoy it. It does not take much to please me in the line of music, you know."

"Jennie," said a young lady, turning away from the mirror and addressing a companion, "what would you do if you had a moustache on your lip?" "If I liked him I would keep quiet," was the demure reply.

Mamma: "But, Flora, my dear child, how do you know that this young man loves you? Has he told you so?" Flora: "Oh, no, mamma! But if you could only see the way he looks at me when I am not looking at him!"

Every pound weight of cochineal contains 70,000 insects boiled to death; so that the annual sacrifice of insectual life, to procure our scarlet and crimson dyes, is about 28,000,000 of those small members of the creation.

A new novel is called "A Lady's Four Wishes." An old bachelor says he hasn't read the book, but he knows what her wishes are: "First, a new bonnet; second, a new bonnet; third, a new bonnet; fourth, a new bonnet."

The Women's Union in Vienna educates young women in bookkeeping, drawing, kindergarten work, dressmaking, needlework and shorthand. When they are competent in any department, the Union proceeds to find employment for them.

Miss Logan, daughter of General Logan, married a Mr. Tucker. Ex-Congressman Tucker's daughter married a Mr. Logan. A son has been the fruit of marriage in each instance, and the boys bear respectively the names Logan Tucker and Tucker Logan.

"How nice and quiet it is out here," she said, as she led him from the crowded parlor and sat on the stairs. "Yes," he replied; "this would be a fine place to hang the mistletoe." "Oh, no," she returned, smiling archly; "it is so dark here that it isn't necessary."

Mother: "Then you have decided to marry James, Clara?" Daughter: "Yes, mamma. We think it will be an economical measure for us to get married." Mother: "Where does the economy come in?" Daughter: "Well, we both wear the same sized spectacles."

Schleswig, Germany, boasts of an institution unique of its kind and well worthy of imitation. It is a spinsters' insurance company. Its purpose is to provide for the single lady members of well-to-do families. The company gives them shelter, board and pin money in case of the death of their natural providers.

An English journal states that the first prize winner for Cheshire cheese at the Royal and the second prize-winner are two sisters; the third prize-winner is their mother, and the highly commended is taken by another sister; so that the whole of the honors in this class went to one family. That may be called a dairy family of premium-takers.

A couple of years ago an Attica, Ind., young woman had two suitors for her hand. With the favored one she had a quarrel that ended in his rival being declared the "lucky fellow." This union turned out unhappily, and recently she was divorced and married the other of the rivals, who, in the meantime had become helpless through paralysis. He had to be assisted to sit up during the performance of the marriage ceremony.

Masculinities.

Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it.

He who takes the child by the hand takes the mother by the heart.

Examine into your own shortcomings, rather than those of others.

It is hard to please everybody, but it is a good deal harder to make everybody please you.

Children don't often consult the will of the father; his only will that they are apt to care much about is his last.

It is the man with the saucy wife and busy mother-in-law who never reads speeches. He hears too many of them.

As between the dude and his cane, at this writing, the cane seems to have a trifle the best of it in the shape of head.

When going from a warm atmosphere into a cooler one keep the mouth always closed, so that the air may be warmed by its passage through the nose ere it reaches the lungs.

After the horse is 9 years old a wrinkle comes in the eyelid; at the upper corner of the lower lid, and every year thereafter he has one well-defined wrinkle for each year of his age over 9.

"Then you do love me, Evaline?" he said. "I do," she murmured. "And shall I speak to your pa?" he asked. "No," she replied, "speak to ma; pa isn't of any account in this family."

A suicide who killed himself with a revolver said in his farewell note: "I know it is foolish to commit suicide, but please see that I get credit with the public for knowing that it was loaded."

Aniline oil is coming to be used as a local anæsthetic when simple operations are to be performed. The finger is dipped for a short time in the oil, and there is entire absence of pain though it is cut to the bone.

Young Stayer, at 11.55 P. M.: "What a charming song that was. I wish you would repeat it. What is it called?" Miss Bored: "I chose it because I thought it might be new to you. It's entitled 'Going.'"

"Papa, teacher says everybody will tell the truth in heaven." "Yes, my darling." "And shall you go to heaven, papa?" "I hope so." (After reflection.) "Well, p'raps there'll be some other way to know you."

When a man comes home late at night, after working hard all the evening at the office on the books, it is mean for his wife to require him to say: "Should such a shapely sash shabby stitches show?" before she will unbolt the front door.

As two little girls were playing together they became exceedingly confidential, and one of them told the other a long story about what her father did for a living, and ended by asking her companion: "And what does your papa do?" "Whatever mamma says," was the reply.

The authoress of "Loving and Being Loved" compares a man to a silk umbrella in these quaint terms: "A good man is like a strong silken umbrella—trustworthy and a shelter when the storms of life pour down upon us. A mere walking-stick when the sun shines; a friend in misfortune."

Eastern hotel clerk: "What did 938 want?" Hall boy: "Nothin'. He didn't ring. Must a been some other number, sir. He said he didn't ring an' didn't want anything, an' he says he's very comfortable, sir." "Very comfortable! He's got one of the cheapest rooms in the house. Go turn the heat off!"

"My dear," said he to his lady love, "I have been busy all day; not manual labor, you know, but brain work, which is the hardest kind." "Yes, indeed; I know it must be for you." And there was in her eyes a look of tender sympathy which aroused him. She was quite in earnest. He changed the subject.

An Ohio physician, who brought home for microscopic examination a portion of the throat membrane of a diphtheria victim, permitted his children to look at it under a glass cover. Shortly after his entire family was stricken with diphtheria, and 2 children and himself have died. Five others were down with the disease and in a critical condition.

"Let's see," the lawyer mused, as he softly pulled at his ear, "your name is Johnson, isn't it?" "Yes, sir." "You married a widow at Turkey Corner, who had $6,000 in mortgages?" "I married a widder." "And the mortgages?" "Were on the widder's property, gosh hang it! I'm up here now to see if false teeth is a ground for divorce."

A cheerful atmosphere is important to a happy home life. It is very hard for children to be good when they are exposed to an incessant hail-storm of fault-finding from their parents. It is very difficult for a wife to maintain a calm and cheerful demeanor when her husband is critical, cynical or sullen, and takes all her tender efforts with indifferent appreciation.

On a sign over a store in a New England village the following was painted: "Dry Goods; by John Bagster; Who Wishes to get Married." This sign drew all kinds of customers. The single ladies went as a matter of course, and the married men told their wives to go, under the impression that they could easily get good bargains out of one they think such a fool.

A well-known New York physician says that he was once rung up in the middle of the night and requested by a man to call immediately upon his wife. "Very well," said the doctor. "How much will it cost?" asked the caller. "Ten dollars—to go that distance to-night." "How much will it be if you call in the morning?" "Two dollars." "Well, call in the morning," said the economic husband.

In the land of pumpkin pies and cider there lived a man who had a great fondness for the latter. One day, on going to the cellar to fill the pitcher, he fell from the top to the bottom of the stairs. His wife, hearing the fall, in great alarm ran to the top of the stairs and cried out: "My dear, you haven't broke our brand new pitcher, have you?" "No," said he, in an agony of pain from the fall, "but I'll be dashed if I don't!" And, suiting the action to the word, he broke it against the wall.

Recent Book Issues.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

Our Little Ones and The Nursery is a splendid publication for younger readers, both in reading and pictures. Published by the Russell Publishing Company, Boston, Mass.

The New York Sunday Mercury has published an interesting fac simile of its first numbers issued. This early effort shows the seeds of those excellences that have since made *The Mercury* one of the best papers in the land.

The Philadelphia Record and *The Inquirer* almanacs for 1888 are at hand, and both are fine pieces of typographical work. The pages of the almanacs are filled with desirable and useful information, besides a number of elegant pictures.

The second number of *The Woman's World* is an improvement on the first issue, as good as that was. The leading article is on "Mary Anderson in the Winter's Tale," portraits of Miss Anderson as Hermione and Perdita accompany the article. A paper on "The Fallacy of the Superiority of Man" and "A Treatise of Hoops" are both good. "The Truth About Clement Ker" is continued. Oscar Wilde's literary and other notes are full and interesting. The fashions are described at length. Cassell & Co., publishers, New York.

Cassell's Family Magazine for January is well seasoned with the festive spirit. The frontispiece, entitled "Spell-bound," is an engraving printed in rich brown, representing a girl with a book in her hand, the pages of which open with bright promise. "How I Spent Christmas in the "Fatherland" is a good old-fashioned Christmas story. "A Wet Day in London" is a bright description of a dull thing. Both pen and pencil have been called upon and the sketches are thoroughly characteristic. "The Family Doctor discusses headaches this month. The other articles form an excellent variety. This number opens a new volume of one of the best of family magazines. Cassell & Co., New York.

The Magazine of American History for January contains a handsomely illustrated article on "Thurlow Weed's Home on Twelfth Street, New York City," with a portrait of the politician as a frontispiece; General Marcus J. Wright, of Washington, contributes an account of the battle of Tohopeka, or Horse Shoe, with the Creek Indians in 1814, from the pen of General Andrew Jackson, an official account never before published, and Mr. William G. Davis has a paper, entitled an "Historical Sketch of Christ Church, New York, City." "Reciprocity; or, Commercial Union with Canada," is the subject of an article by Dr. Prosper Bender. Published at New York.

In the *Magazine of Art* for January the opening paper is devoted to the consideration of the "Forest of Fontainbleau in Winter." Both pen and pencil are called into service in this article, and the result is a delight to the eye as well as to the mind. A full-page engraving is devoted to that quaint old painting by John Van Eyck, "John Arnolfini of Lucca and his wife." The new editor of the magazine, M. H. Spielmann, contributes a readable paper on "Glimpses of Artist Life," showing how art studies are pursued in London. The Boy of Egremond furnishes the subject of this month's chapter on the "Romance of Art Stories." The other articles are all of a high character, and the numerous engravings are real works of art. Cassell & Co., New York.

The seventh of Mr. David A. Well's articles of the "Economic Disturbance Series" commences in the January number of the *Popular Science Monthly*. Other excellent articles are "Railroads and Trade-Centers," "Evolution and Religious Thought," "Glimpses of Life along a Coral Reef," "The Psychology of Joking," "Race and Language," "Science and the Bishops," and "The Outcome of the Granger Movement." The "English Phonology" marks some important differences that have grown up between English and American pronunciations of our language;" "The Monkeys of British Guiana" are happily described; a portrait and biographical sketch are given of Professor Cleveland Abbe, the pioneer of the United States Weather Service. Terms, $5 a year. D. Appleton & Co., publishers, New York.

The January number of *The Eclectic*, beginning a new volume, has a fine steel engraving of the interior of the Coliseum at Rome. The leading paper, by Emilio Castelar, the great Spanish statesman, is on "The Papacy and the Temporal Power." "The Story of Zebehr Pasha" is completed, and the succeeding paper is on "French Socialism." Alfred Russell Wallace contributes a study of "The Antiquity of Man in North America." "On Some Differences between Colleges and Castles" is a pleasant essay. A writer gives a brilliant and entertaining social study in "The French Women of the Century." H. G. Keene writes of Omar Khayyam, the great Persian poet and moralist. H. M. Hyndman, the Socialist, answers Mr. Mallock's recent articles in a short paper on "Wealth and Ability." "The Nerve Cure Rest" is by James Muir Howie; "A Teacher of the Violin," is a good short story. The poetry of the number consists of several admirable new translations from Schiller, by Sir Theodore Martin. Published by E. R. Pelton, 25 Bond street, New York. Terms, $5 per year.

"Regulate the Regulator" with Warner's Log Cabin Sarsaparilla, the great blood remedy. 120 doses for $1. All druggists.

THE ROMANCE OF THIEVING.

Although a man always looks upon a clever theft with an air of romance, he never quite realizes the position until the thief or sharper has fleeced himself.

We are apt to laugh at the misfortunes of the man who puts his head out of his cab on a foggy day, in answer to a knock at the window, and finds his hat disappearing in the gloom.

Nor do we show more sympathy with the man who collides with another individual in the street, and who, on having his hat, which has fallen, handed back with profuse apologies for the accident, finds, from its size and general appearance, that not many hours before it must have adorned a scarecrow.

But these incidents in no way illustrate the coolness and intrepidity of the professional thief, who does not usually aim at trifles.

Last winter, an ingenious theft was perpetrated by two well-known pick-pockets, who had followed a gentleman out of a theatre. For a moment they parted company, and when the younger joined his companion, he handed him a pocket-book, from which were taken some notes and money. To substitute false notes was the work of a second.

"You have lost your pocket-book, sir," said the elder thief, hurrying after the gentleman.

With a cool bow, the thief hastened away, pleased with the gentleman's thanks—and his watch.

Not long ago, a thief was detected in the act of stealing a gentleman's watch. In his haste to escape he ran into the arms of a detective, who had been watching him for some time. Naturally, the thief must have felt somewhat excited at such a moment; but, if he did, he showed no symptoms of being so.

Although instantly secured by the unenviable handcuffs, he had the presence of mind to pass the watch, unobserved, into the pocket of a passer-by. The person was puzzled to know how he became the possessor of the watch, and, being afraid of keeping the gift, was sufficiently honest to hand it to the police.

Another instance of the remarkable coolness and audacity of a thief, though perhaps not an uncommon one, is worth relating:

One day, a city thief, having watched his opportunity, took up a coat that hung outside a pawn-shop. Flinging it over his arm, and carrying it into the shop as if intending to make a purchase, he offered it for sale. Not recognizing his own property, the pawn-broker bought the coat. But even this did not satisfy the thief. He handled some silk handkerchiefs, and, in choosing one, remarked carelessly:

"Take pay for this out of the money for the coat."

"But I have given you the money," indignantly answered the pawn-broker.

"Oh, no; you haven't," said the thief.

A warm altercation ensued. In vain the shopman protested that he had paid the money; and at last the thief went out in search of an officer to settle the dispute, taking with him some silver spoons, several silk handkerchiefs, as well as the silk handkerchief in question, which, in his excitement, the broker had forgotten.

Some five or six years ago, the shopkeepers of a certain town were thrown into a state of alarm by a couple of young lads. One of the two used to make a small purchase at a shop, and, by telling a plausible tale that a boy outside would take the purchase from him if it were seen, he got the shopman to put the article down the back of his coat. Whilst thus employed, the ingenious youth very easily relieved the shopman of his watch, and then bolted.

After him came 'the boy outside', to inform the shopman of his loss. The latter, having had carefully described to him the road the thief had not taken, ran at once after the culprit, the second boy, in the meantime, helping himself to the contents of the till. How often this larceny was practiced few of them care to remember.

SELF-RESTRAINT.—It is related of Alfieri, the Italian poet, that once, in a sudden fit of anger, he nearly killed his servant by striking him on the temple with a brass candlestick. Alfieri became very repentant, and, a biographer says, he never afterwards struck a servant, except with his fist or a chair. Such consideration is rarely met with, except in a person who has a highly sensitive, poetic nature. We can imagine Alfieri repressing the impulse to hurl a five-pound candlestick at a servant who has displeased him, and smashing his head with a chair.

A CAMDEN man is being laughed at considerably there, and readers would do well to profit by his experience. He wished to make his wife a present of a muff and took home two for her to select from, one a cheap and the other a high-priced article. Thinking to have a little fun at the expense of his better half, he changed the tables. The cheap one was very much admired, but seeing the price on the ticket, she said they could not afford that and would take the other. It looks a little as though the joke was on the man of the house.

"DID IT RAIN!" exclaimed the Western man in the course of a thrilling recital of border life. "Say, it rained so hard that afternoon that the water stood three feet on a slant roof."

The surest and purest liniment in the market is Salvation Oil. It kills pain. Price 25c.

A national dispenser of happiness is a 25 cent bottle of Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup.

STORIES OF PARROTS.—Brehm, the author of a German work called "The History of Animals," affirms that parrots of the more intelligent Indian and African varieties have not only been taught many phrases which they repeat by note, but that they have come to understand the meaning of what they say, and use words independently in their proper sense. He cites the case of an East Indian parrot who learned a large number of Dutch words in his native country. Brought to Europe he learned a large number of German and French words in succession. He asked for water, for food, for playthings, and for a chance to get out of his cage, which was regularly allowed him.

He did not always use the German word for what he wanted, in speaking to Germans, but sometimes substituted the Dutch words in their proper sense. No doubt a good many of his native speeches and jabberings were put down as "Dutch" by his German masters.

Scaliger tells of a parrot who imitated the calls used in the dances of the Savoyards, and repeated parts of their songs; and Jacques Brunot, a French writer, tells of an African parrot who danced as he had seen the people do, repeating as he did so words of their songs: "A little step! A little jump! Ion! Ion!"

Menault, another Frenchman of science, tells of a famous parrot, for which Cardinal Bossa paid a hundred gold crowns, because he recited without a blunder the Apostle's Creed and chanted the Magnificat correctly.

The story is recorded in English anecdotal collections, if not in grave histories, that a parrot belonging to Henry VIII. once fell into the Thames, and summoned passers-by to the rescue by calling out "Help! Help!"

The Indian parrot of whom the account is given by Brehm was deprived of its mistress by death. It refused to eat, and cried repeatedly, "Where is madam? Where is madam?"

One of the friends of the family, an elderly major, once patronised the parrot by saying to him, "Jump on to your perch, Jacko, there's a good bird; jump on to your perch!" Jacko looked at him an instant contemptuously, and then exclaimed, "Jump on to the perch, Major, jump on to the perch!"

TURNED TO STONE.—It always seems very wonderful to see anything which would generally decay with the progress of time, turned instead into stone. Petrified wood having the appearance of wood but with its light fibers changed to heavy stone is a curiosity, but a greater wonder is a fish that has petrified.

A petrified salmon has recently been found in California, the fleshy parts keeping their pinkish yellow color, and what was the skin being now a sort of porcelain or white flint. The whole is like the very hardest quartz.

A lady once found a petrified cucumber in Germany. She took it to a jeweler and had it "sliced," when it was found that it had the natural colors of the cucumber—green skin, greenish white pulp, and pure white seeds. The slices were polished and set as jewels forming, when fastened together, a strange but beautiful necklace, brooch and bracelets. It was considered more beautiful than agate or onyx, and was certainly more rare than diamonds and of greater value than any other cucumber ever was.

This incident ought to upset the theory that fresh cucumbers are worth more than those that have been picked a long time, and prove that age makes them more valuable—though perhaps not more digestible!"

ONE of the smallest manuscripts in the world is to be sold in London. It is advertised thus: For sale, a grain of rice, with the whole first chapter of the Koran written on it; given to an English officer in 1812 by an American gentleman, who received it from an Arab sheikh, whom he had cured of a dangerous fever in the desert.

WANAMAKER'S.

PHILADELPHIA, January 21, 1888.

It is a good time now to come to the Store. All the anxiety of weeks of preparation and the strain of the doubly busiest days of the year are off and over. Everybody has had a sleep and a holiday, and we are all cheerier and readier to begin anew. It is like the rest at midday under the trees in harvest time; we are refreshed and at it again with a will. There's a plenty to see. The Store is like a river at the foot of a mountain down whose sides a score of steady streams are pouring. While the outlet is into the ocean of people, the daily inletting keeps everything full and fresh.

DRESS PATTERNS. SOME IN BOXES, SOME OUT. Greatly reduced prices.

at $3	Robe for 2	at $6.50	Robe for 5
at $4	Robe for 3	at $8	Robe for 6
at $5	Robe for 4	at $10	Robe for 7

A SURPRISE IN BLANKETS. ABOUT THE BIGGEST Blanket we have is 84x99 inches—6½ pounds of it. One of the best and prettiest Blankets we ever sold at $10 a pair. To-day you shall have them at $8.50 a pair; a little smaller (72x84 inches), and a little lighter (7½ pounds), $7.50.

Another of the Blanket surprises. Seven pounds of wool—no, there is maybe half a pound of cotton warp in it. $4.25 for a pair.

And so on through all our Blankets from baby's crib size ($1.25 to $4.50) to a thick, fleecy "California" of "North Star" ($12 to $13.50).

200 SMYRNA RUGS. LOOK AT THE PRICES. There is a breezy vigor in such prices quite refreshing:

18x36 in.,	35c	30x60 in.,	$2.48
27x54 in.,	$1.45	36x72 in.,	$3.75
2½x5 ft.,	$2.10	4x7 ft.,	$6.00

If you can't come to the Store, you can order by mail anything you want.

JOHN WANAMAKER,
Philadelphia.

R. R. R. RADWAY'S READY RELIEF.

In from one to twenty minutes never fails to relieve PAIN with one thorough application. No matter how violent or excruciating the pain, the Rheumatic, Bedridden, Infirm, Crippled, Nervous, Neuralgic, or prostrated with disease may suffer, Radway's Ready Relief will afford instant ease. It instantly relieves and soon cures

Rheumatism,	**Neuralgia,**
Coughs,	**Colds,**
Cold in the Head,	**Sore Throat,**
Asthma,	**Bronchitis,**
Pneumonia,	**Sciatica,**
Headache,	**Inflammations,**
Toothache,	**Congestion.**

Strong Testimony from Honorable George Starr as to the Power of Radway's Ready Relief in a Case of Sciatic Rheumatism.

NO. 3 VAN NESS PLACE, New York.
DR. RADWAY: With me your Relief has worked wonders. For the last three years I have had frequent and severe attacks of sciatica, sometimes extending from the lumbar regions to my ankles, and, at times, in both lower limbs.

During the time I have been afflicted I have tried almost all the remedies recommended by wise men and fools, hoping to find relief, but all proved to be failures.

I have tried various kinds of baths, manipulations, outward applications of liniments too numerous to mention, and prescriptions of the most eminent physicians, all of which failed to give me relief.

Last September, at the urgent request of a friend (who had been afflicted as myself), I was induced to try your remedy. I was then suffering fearfully with one of my old turns. To my surprise and delight the first application gave me ease, after boiling and rubbing the parts affected, leaving the limb in a warm glow, created by the Relief. In a short time the pain passed entirely away, although I have slight periodical attacks approaching a change of weather, I know now how to cure myself, and feel quite master of the situation. RADWAY'S READY RELIEF is my friend. I never travel without a bottle in my valise. Yours truly,
GEO. STARR.

Radway's Ready Relief is a Cure for Every Pain, Sprains, Bruises, Pains in the Back, Chest or Limbs. It was the First and is the Only PAIN REMEDY

that instantly stops the most excruciating pains, allays inflammation, and cures Congestions, whether of the Lungs, Stomach, Bowels or other glands or organs.

INTERNALLY, a half to a teaspoonful in half a tumbler of water will, in a few minutes, cure Cramps, Spasms, Sour Stomach, Nausea, Vomiting, Heartburn, Nervousness, Sleeplessness, Sick Headache, Diarrhœa, Colic, Flatulency and all internal pains.

Malaria in Its Various Forms Cured and Prevented.

There is not a remedial agent in the world that will cure Fever and Ague, and all other Malarious, Bilious and other fevers, aided by RADWAY'S PILLS, so quickly as RADWAY'S READY RELIEF.

R. R. R. not only cures the patient seized with Malaria, but if people exposed to the Malarial poison will every morning take 20 or 30 drops of Ready Relief in water, and eat, say a cracker, before going out, they will prevent attacks.

Travellers should always carry a bottle of RADWAY'S READY RELIEF with them. A few drops in water will prevent sickness or pains from change of water. It is better than French Brandy or Bitters as a stimulant.

Fifty cents per bottle. Sold by druggists.

DR. RADWAY'S SARSAPARILLIAN RESOLVENT,

The Great Blood Purifier

For the cure of all chronic diseases, Chronic rheumatism, scrofulous complaints, etc., glandular swellings, hacking dry cough, cancerous affections, bleeding of the lungs, dyspepsia, water brash, white swellings, tumors, ulcers, hip disease, goat, dropsy, rickets, salt rheum, bronchitis, consumption, liver complaints, etc.

HEALTH! BEAUTY!

Pure blood makes sound flesh, strong bone and a clear skin. If you would have your flesh firm, your bones sound, and your complexion fair, use RADWAY'S SARSAPARILLIAN RESOLVENT.

The wonderful cures effected by the Sarsaparillian Resolvent; its powers over the kidneys in establishing a healthy secretion of urine, curing diabetes, inflammation or irritation of the bladder, albuminous or brick dust deposits or white sand, etc., establishing its character as A GREAT CONSTITUTIONAL REMEDY.

Sold by all druggists. One Dollar a bottle.

RADWAY'S PILLS,

The Great Liver and Stomach Remedy,

For the cure of all disorders of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels, Kidneys, Bladder, Nervous Diseases, Loss of Appetite, Headache, Costiveness, Indigestion, Biliousness, Fever, Inflammation of the Bowels, Piles, and all derangements of the Internal Viscera. Purely vegetable, containing no mercury, minerals, or deleterious drugs.

PERFECT DIGESTION

Will be accomplished by taking one of Radway's Pills every morning about ten o'clock, as a dinner pill. By so doing

SICK HEADACHE

Dyspepsia, Foul Stomach, Biliousness will be avoided, and the food that is eaten contribute its nourishing properties for the support of the natural waste of the body.

☞Observe the following symptoms resulting from Diseases of the digestive organs: Constipation, inward piles, fulness of the blood in the head, acidity of the stomach, nausea, heartburn, disgust of food, fulness or weight in the stomach, sour eructations, sinking or fluttering of the heart, choking or suffocating sensations when in a lying posture, dimness of vision, dots or webs before the sight, fever and dull pain in the head, deficiency of perspiration, yellowness of the skin and eyes, pain in the side, chest, limbs and sudden flushes of heat, burning in the flesh.

A few doses of RADWAY'S PILLS will free the system of all the above named disorders.

PRICE, 25 cents Per Box. Sold by all druggists.

Send a letter stamp to RADWAY & CO., No. 32 Warren street, New York.

☞Information worth thousands will be sent you

Humorous.

THE WAY THINGS GO.

The jolliest fellow you ever met
Is a dismal man at home;
The wittiest girl in society's set
Will with headaches her wit atone.

The man whose graces a court would adorn
Is tied to a desk from night till morn;
And the man who would lend his last cent to a friend
Never has the first cent to lend.

—U. N. Nonk.

Elegant extract—Helping a girl out of the mire.

The monarch of Greece is supposed to have a fat situation.

The dishonest butcher is always willing to meet his customers half-weight.

There is one kind of vice which never sticks to young people enough to hurt them, and that is advice.

An old bachelor says that the talk of women is usually about men; even their laugh is but "he! he! he!"

Librarian, recording the condition of a book: "Page 47, a hole." Turning the leaf: "Page 48, another hole."

A father, in reproving his son, said sternly to him: "Did you ever see me doing such a thing as that when I was a boy?"

A matter of course. "Of what did you say they convicted the doctor?" "Well, I don't know exactly; but I suppose it was surgery."

Presence of mind is all well enough in some cases, but when a man finds himself in danger of freezing to death he shouldn't try to keep too cool.

"Ma," said Bobby, "you told me to count one hundred every time I felt angry." "Yes, Bobby." "Well, I've got up to sixty, an' I'm getting angrier every minute."

"No, Algernon, I cannot marry you. Papa will not allow it." "Why not?" "Because he says you are an actor." "Well, I must say your father is much kinder than the critics."

"Papa, what is a bender?" "A bender? Why, it's what men get on sometime." "Does it bend 'em when they get on it?" "Yes, it bends them, and if they stay on too long, they will get all broke up."

His older relatives never realize what a yearning there is in the heart of the boy who has a new pair of boots for the first time in his life, to wear them to church with his trousers legs tucked in the tops.

Wife: "Keep quiet, Charlie. The new doctor says I must not talk to you." Husband, feebly: "Mary! Mary!" Wife: "What is it Charlie?" Husband: "Engage that doctor for our family physician."

Jones (meeting Smith, with whom he was out the night before): "Ha, ha boy; got home all right?" Smith, gloomily: "Yes, but my wife wouldn't speak to me." Jones, enviously: "Lucky fellow! Mine did."

A.: "What are you reading?" B.: "It is a very useful book for those who don't know how to swim." A.: "How so?" B.: "If you fall overboard, all you have to do is to turn to page 37 and read the directions, and you are safe."

"Oh, yes," said a grumbling beggar, "folks al'aye helps them as don't need any help. Why, there's lightnin'; it can git down to the ground fast enough all by itself, and yit folks is all the time a-puttin' up rods for it to slide down on."

Charming young hostess: "Why, Major, you are not going so soon?" Major, who prides himself on being one of those fine old-school fellows who can say a neat thing without knowing it: "Soon? Madam, it may seem soon to you; but it seems to me I have been here a lifetime."

Little Nellie, aged 8: "Papa, why don't mamma turn to breakfast?" Papa: "Why, my dear, didn't you know the doctor brought you a new baby brother?" "Well, why don't it turn to breakfast?" "Why, it hasn't any teeth to eat with yet." "I wish you would tell the doctor then to take it back and finish it."

Brother Claude: "Waiting to see Ethel?" Young Somerby: "Well, I sent up my card some time ago." "Well, she ain't in." "Why am I kept waiting, then?" "I heard mamma say that she expected the new minister every minute, and you looked so well with the rest of the things in the parlor she wanted to keep you."

Customer: "Is your milk real pure?" Milkman: "Perfectly pure, ma'am." C., dubiously: "It may be, but—" M.: "But what, ma'am?" C.: "It looks mighty blue." M.: "That's easily accounted for. The cows are feeling blue. They always feel blue this time of the year, when their supply of fresh grass is cut off."

Chicago wins. Omaha boy: "That isn't the only house we've got! We've got two others!" Chicago boy: "Pooh! We've got six houses besides the one we live in." "Well, we've got two horses, too." "We've got three; so there, now!" "I've got eight sisters! What do you think of that?" "Well, I ain't got so many sisters, but I've got five papas."

A stranger riding along a road, observing that the mile-stones were turned so as to face the fields, called to a farmer at work near by and inquired the reason. "Why, bless you, sir," replied the farmer, "the wind is sometimes so strong in these parts that if we didn't turn the backs of the mile-stones to it the figures would all be blown off them, clear and clean."

"No," said the skeptic, "I don't believe half of the stories in the Bible about people being struck dead for their sins, or anything of the kind." "What stories do you mean?" "Why, about Ananias being struck dead, for instance. How is it that the lightning doesn't strike people dead nowadays for lying?" "Because there would have to be a continuous thunder-storm to do it."

Paying off Debts.—In China it is a positive necessity for all accounts to be settled before the close of the old year, and tradesmen will then sell their goods at any price in order to meet their liabilities. Anyone who fails to do so is disgraced, and his name is written on his own door as a defaulter. Debts, which are not settled on New Year's Eve cannot be subsequently recovered, and, therefore, a creditor will pursue his debtor all night long in order to procure payment in time. He is even permitted to lengthen the night by the fiction of carrying a lighted lantern even after daybreak, as if it were still night.

There is one thing, however, which always protects a debtor from an importunate creditor, and that is the presence of a corpse in the house. For this reason, dutiful children will often retain their father's body in the house for years, knowing, in the midst of their grief, that so long as the body is with them, they can be neither dunned for debt nor "evicted" for rent, should they find it inconvenient to pay.

The Class in Scriptures: A lady asked one of the children in her Sunday school class: "What was the sin of the Pharisees?" "Eating camels, ma'am," was the reply. The little girl had read that the Pharisees "strained at gnats and swallowed camels." "In what condition was the patriarch Job at the end of his life?" questioned a teacher of the stolid-looking boy at the foot of the class. "Dead," was the quiet response. "What is the outward and visible sign in baptism?" asked a lady of her Sunday school class. There was silence for some seconds, and then a girl broke in triumphantly with: "The baby, please, ma'am."

Cheap Notoriety.—The utmost power of a horse exerted in drawing a heavy load along the street will excite no attention; but half the power put forth in rearing and plunging will draw a crowd about him. The opening of a side-valve and the hissing of steam will startle a company and be made a subject of remark; but the hiss and sputter of the escaping vapor are nothing compared with the force of the engine that draws the long train along its iron track. So men attract attention by combining irregularity with audacity. A cheap method of notoriety the world over is this rearing and plunging, this opening of a side-valve and escape harmless vapor. M. S.

"You will come to our Fair to-morrow evening, Mr. Sampson, of course," she said with a bewitching smile, "and you must bring lots of money with you." Mr. Sampson was so overcome by the smile that he was on his knees before he knew it, and presently everything was as it should be. "George, dear," the girl said later on, and she said it thoughtfully, "perhaps it will be as well for you not to bring too much money to-morrow evening. We ought both to practice economy now, you know."

In home life there should be no jar, no striving for place, no insisting on prerogatives, or division of interests. The husband and the wife are each the complement of the other. And it is just as much his duty to be cheerful as it is hers to be patient; his right to bring joy into the house, as it is hers to sweep and garnish the pleasant interior. A family where the daily walk of the father makes life a festival is filled with something very like a heavenly benediction.

"I don't see why they use the phrase 'grass widowers,'" said a traveling man to a friend with whom he was returning home from a reception. "Isn't that a good name?" "No, it certainly is not." "What is the objection?" "Why, grass is always green; you know there's no sense in the combination."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself, Bobby," remarked one of the guest at a dinner party. "Yes," assented Bobby, with his mouth full, "I am makin' the most of it, 'cause after pa an' ma give dinner like this it's always cold pickin' for the next thirty days."

A despatch from El Paso, Texas, states that a project has been formed by which fifty-five million acres of land in eleven States in Mexico will be placed on the market for purchase by immigrants and others.

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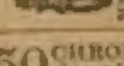

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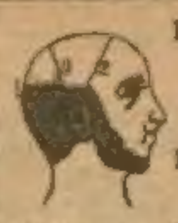

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Latest Fashion Phases.

Few women of the world would agree with Swift in his advice to a very young married lady.

"I would wish you," he says, "to be an utter contemner of all distinctions which a finer petticoat can give you, because it neither makes you richer, handsomer, younger, nor better natured, more virtuous nor wiser, than if it hung upon a peg."

Probably he was right as far as being neither wiser nor more virtuous; but, handsomer, younger-looking, and better natured it would certainly make her. Men's opinions differ from women's much; I was reminded of Swift's homily when I saw some handsome petticoats, with stays to match.

The material was pink moire, studded with flowers of a darker tone; the corsets trimmed with lace, matching the lace flounces one above the other that edged the petticoat, and peeped from beneath the deep battlemented border of the moire.

The other stays were of nut-brown poult de soie, trimmed with blue silk and lace, the petticoat brown, cut in small vandykes edged with a French hem, beneath this three or four flounces of lace were intermixed with light blue silk. They were elaborately lined with muslin, which gave them an easy flow at the back.

Women who make dress a study, have toilettes suited to all the exigencies of life, and are rarely to be caught at a disadvantage. Each one perfect in its way, perfection including suitability and becomingness, for dress should be arranged to develope every latent charm and to conceal defects. This cannot be done by those who are economically inclined. Whether the "game is worth the candle" is a matter of opinion, but to be well dressed means to spend money freely, and at the present moment more than usual attention is paid to underclothing, matinees, and tea gowns.

Tea gowns remind me of some original and charming models. One is quite a revival of a Louis XIV. pattern, in striped velvet of grey and Gobelin blue, with frise flowers, having dashes of red here and there. The front is made loose in red, matching the lining, which shows at the sides.

Several others were composed of striped plush, brocaded with an indented pattern, as though it had been ironed on to the original plush, so that you saw a different effect in every light and in every movement of the wearer. One, in shades of old pink, had an old pink poult de soie front—vieux rose I mean, not any of the blue-pinks that are ugly.

Sometimes these tea gowns are made with silk and cloth for more useful wear, and a beautiful example was a striped velvet and matelasse, the velvet stripes narrow, the matelasse wide, made up with cloth. Brown is fashionable now, and the tint of all tints in Paris is puce, the shade of that disagreeable domestic insect, a flea.

For a tea gown to be thoroughly fashionable and useful, it must be now made in handsome materials be long, and apparently loose in the front.

Everyone knows that braiding is fashionable in both wide and narrow braids, the narrower sewn on the edge, the wider often blended with cord, but there are newer braidings still. On rich poult de soie and fine cloth, the most intricate patterns, with hardly a pin's point between, are worked in a smooth rat-tail cord, just like the rat tail chenille used for fringe. It is exactly what its name conveys, very soft and smooth, like a veritable rat's tail. These materials are being made up with velvet and silk, velvet petticoats being most fashionable.

A really beautiful costume was in a brown shade; a velvet petticoat, a long polonaise, with the Incroyable basques reaching to the hem, but allowing the petticoat to be well seen before and behind. It opened diagonally across the front with a certain amount of fulness, and narrow pleatings edged the opening all down, handsomely trimmed with passementerie of the same shade of beads. With this was a velvet mantle, having distinct sleeves and longer ends than the back; the seams outlined with passementerie, and a succession of ornaments in pairs down the front. The muff was made of velvet and cloth, and the bonnet stood up well in front with birds and vulture plumes.

Peau de soie is much worn, it is firm and strong, displaying the figure to the best advantage. It blends well with woollens. A black peau de soie, with a tiny floral motif in brocade, was used for the bodice of a dress, with an admixture of black cloth; the plastron front and the cuffs of rich red plush, the drapery on the skirt caught up with heavy tassels of black and red sparsely introduced. Tassels appear on most of the best gowns.

With this dress was a little mantle of quite a new cut. The back reached to the waist and fitted the figure; but the front had a piece of kilt-pleated silk quite in the middle, which was only lightly caught together and yielded to every movement of its wearer. There were loops of cord with heavy tassels across the bust.

There are some gowns which only a well dressed woman would wear, "one who, adorned by art and nature pleases, and thereby makes others strive to please her."

A rich blue velvet of the tone that used to be called Eugenie has been made up for a dinner gown after the style that prevailed when the "Merrie Monarch" was king, he who "never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one." The sleeves are puffed, and have cuffs of vandyked lace coming just below the elbow. The plain train is of silk, but the front of the skirt is velvet, with some broad pleats, which make the drapery of the front consistent. Down the centre of the front breadth is a strip of lace, the edges joined together, and the wide lace which drapes the bodice and turns back like the Stuart collar mingles on the skirt with the lace placed there; the collar and style were most original. A green vigogne morning gown had the same merit. It fitted perfectly. There was a habit basque and plain front; the collar trimmed with a gold galon, inclosing a design in steel, the form like close-set fleur-de-lis. Similar galon bordered strips of cloth, brought from beneath the arms, and crossing the bodice when worn, a style which develops the lines of a good figure wonderfully.

Short wraps are in greater variety than long ones. One new one is not unlike a tight-fitting sleeveless basque, with long fronts, short sides and a back that is nothing but a short full-plaited ruffle. The entire lower edge is trimmed with a lace flouncing about six inches deep, plaited very full. The lace is so placed across the back that it goes under the postilion or plaiting, and does not follow the outline of the edge. On the shoulders are set pieces of flouncing in very close side plaits. This flouncing is nearly or quite half a yard deep and falls to the elbows, making sleeves.

Another model has these lace cape sleeves lined with soft black wool goods, which is basted inside, pinked out on the edges and side plaited with the lace. The effect is very good, and the shoulders are protected. The garment is made of faille, and has a full plaited ruching of lace around the neck and down the fronts.

It is also rumored that plain plush wraps are to be as popular as ever. Certainly nothing we have ever had was softer or prettier, and nothing more becoming as a background for the face has ever been worn unless it be sealskin.

The only material difference in these wraps from last season will be found in the manner of trimming. They will be trimmed with flat-headed trimming, with rich ornaments at the front of the collar, on the sleeves and at the lower ends of the fronts. Some of them will have epaulets of fine beads, with long drooping strands of beads.

Odds and Ends.

AMUSEMENTS FOR WINTER PARTIES.

So long as the winter comes round with its accustomed regularity, so long will juvenile parties hold their own, and the puzzling question arises with the same regularity as to the amusements that are to be provided for the youngsters.

An amusing game for children is very easily managed and will provide the youngsters with merriment for a long time. A nearly full-sized donkey is cut out of calico, or some similar material, tinted correctly, and pinned or fastened in position flat against the wall. The tail is then cut off, and care must be taken that the animal be fixed at such a height as to be easily reached by any of the children, for each child in turn must be blindfolded, and the fun consists in providing it with the dismembered tail and a large pin, with which it has to pin the tail on to the animal's body, in as nearly the correct position as possible.

The child who best succeeds in placing it in its original place is rewarded with a present, but is prohibited from trying again. This may be continued until all the children have won a present, or till the amusement of the game has began to pall. A horse, lion, cat, dog or other animal may be substituted for the donkey if preferred.

Another great amusement for children is to stretch across the room from side to side, high above the heads of the young sters, and to suspend from it from strings about a foot long, a number of paper bags filled with sugar-plums. The children are provided with soft balls with which to pelt the bags of sugar-plums until they burst, and the contents are scattered over the room, when a truly enjoyable scramble ensues, such as every hearty child rejoices in.

Sticks might be used instead of balls, except for the possibility of danger to the eyes of the combatants, while for children who can manage them much fun is caused by their shooting at the packets with a bow and arrows.

Children always enjoy making soap-bubbles, and parties of a dozen or so may be established in an empty room where the splashes can do no harm, and provided with shallow dishes full of soap-suds, and pipes with well-waxed mouth-pieces. A few drops of cochineal will color the water and add to the pretty effect of the bubbles. A prize may be given to the maker of the largest, and another to the maker of the one that remains longest unbroken.

It is really wonderfully how swiftly the time will pass while the little guests are engaged in this absorbing occupation.

In New York, not only the children, but grown-up people too have been seen gravely engrossed in this fleeting pleasure. The most enjoyable bubble parties, however, are those that are held out of doors, on a hot, calm afternoon in summer.

Fish-ponds are amusing and nearly as absorbing as soap-bubble making. The pond itself is somewhat difficult to arrange, as it requires to be sunk below the level of the anglers, but those who are clever in arranging theatricals or impromptu charades will have no difficulty in managing this.

The pond itself should consist of a large mirror or sheet of looking-glass, laid flat on the floor of the room, and with a border about a foot high, of virgin cork, arranged all round it. Pots of fern and various trailing plants are arranged amongst the cork to conceal the mechanism of the pond. A sort of stand or platform should be arranged along one side of the pond, on which the fishers can stand. This should have three or four steps at each end, so that the would-be sportsman can ascend the step at one end, have their turn, and descend on the other side. Plants in pots and trails of ivy will be needed here also, to give a pretty look to the affair and hide imperfections.

Should the givers of the entertainment be fortunate enough to possess a landing, three or four steps above a hall into which one can look over a parapet, this would be the very thing for an amusement of this kind, the pond being in the hall below, and the children on the landing above.

The rods are manufactured of long, firm branches or walking-sticks, with a long piece of string attached to one end, to which is fastened a strong hook of stout wire, which will bear the weight of the packets which will serve as fish. The rods should be tied up with ribbons of various colors, and each present packed up in colored paper, tied up with ribbon and with a loop of ribbon left with which to hook the parcel up by.

A small brass curtain ring tied tightly in with the ribbon and left standing upright, answers very well, but skill is needed in hitting the happy medium between a parcel that is very difficult to get hold of, and one that is just as much too easy.

The presents must not be large enough to be difficult to raise with the rod or heavy enough to break the looking-glass, should they chance to fall back on it from a height just perhaps in the triumph of landing.

Of course, a grown-up person should superintend the management of the fish-pond, and such a one should be chosen who is capable of pouring out a good torrent of fun. If he or she be dressed up in comic nautical costume, why, so much the better.

Each child should have three tries, and if unsuccessful in all three attempts may try again after some of the others have had their turns. Care must be taken to provide a present for each child, and the pond must be re-stocked with fish occasionally, when the supply seems to be falling short.

The very little people, too, may need assistance from the "good fairy of the pond," who may be summoned when required by the presiding genius. This role may be undertaken by a child, and she may be useful in re-stocking the pond and performing many little offices round its banks. A very pretty dress, too, of white and green, with a wreath of water lilies may be devised for this small creature.

Confidential Correspondents.

M. R.—Pumice stone comes from volcanoes.

M. L. B.—Guests do not bid their hostesses good-by at large establishments; they quietly withdraw.

DISPUTE.—The napkin is used before the fruit course comes on. The doyley is used with and after the fruit course.

SOLDIER.—"The Seven Years' War" was the conflict maintained by Prussia against Russia, France, and Austria, 1756-1763.

GENIUS.—The metropolitan district of London covers an area of 690 square miles. 2. Philadelphia has an area of 129 square miles.

KENDAL.—The best, and, in fact, the only proper course is to take advice from some trusted friend, on whose judgment and honesty you can rely.

JUNIOR.—It is proper to give an engagement-ring when an engagement is made. The date of the marriage is a mere matter of arrangement and convenience.

HOST.—There is no particular mode of addressing persons when entering a room; it is a ceremony which must be left to the good taste and discretion of the individuals.

JANE.—Such marriages often prove to be very happy ones. When you get to be fifty years old, your husband will be only sixty-six, and you won't think that there is much difference in your ages then.

BAILEY.—The ancient Greeks and Romans were in the habit of sweetening their food with honey, but we have no reason to suppose that they were acquainted with sugar. Sugar was unknown in Europe until the time of the Crusades, and is supposed to have been invented by the Arabs.

GALLOP.—No one can tell whether exercise in a gymnasium will cure any particular person of nervousness or not. Such a matter can only be determined by actual experiment. It might cure some persons, and increase the nervousness of others. If you try it, you should begin with caution.

TAXPAYER U. S.—"Conscience money" is money that is anonymously sent to the National Treasury and is understood to be paid by persons who have by some unlawful means either defrauded the revenue or become possessed of public money. The sum thus received every year from evil-doers of tender conscience is a large one.

M. M.—There is no "proper" shape for finger nails, in contradistinction to improper shapes. It is proper for people to let their finger nails be of any shape they choose. A very sharp pocket-knife is a good instrument for trimming them. It is a matter of convenience to keep the finger nails trimmed short enough to prevent them from breaking and splitting readily.

BROWN.—Your handwriting seems to be artificial, or affected, rather than natural and simple. It looks as though you were trying to acquire a peculiar style of penmanship, different from that of other people. If that is really so, then your handwriting indicates that you have a tendency to be affected and artificial in character, rather than plain, simple and natural.

D. S. T.—She should be very careful not to let him know what her feelings are towards him; nor should she have anything to do with him unless he should be properly introduced to her by someone in whom she has confidence. It was improper for her to notice him, and especially so for her to enter into conversation with him, under the circumstances which you describe.

TABITHA.—If the parties are intimate friends, it would be proper for the lady to inform the gentleman of her change of mind. But if they were only acquaintances, it would not be proper for her to do so. As for the note, it would be nobody's property in particular. There would be no reason for him to return the note; and if he should do so, it would be a little queer, and look as though he were a little bit green, or else wished to offend or affront her.

S. S.—The pressure of the air at the surface of the earth is fifteen pounds to the square inch. The atmospheric column which makes the pressure extends from the surface of the earth to the top of the atmosphere, which is supposed to be a distance of about fifty miles. There is no telling what a square foot of air would weigh. As everything has to be weighed in the air at or near the earth's surface where the super-incumbent air rests, to attempt to weigh a portion of the atmosphere would be like attempting to weigh a jug of water at the bottom of the sea.

J. F. S.—People's ideas of beauty differ as widely that what is all loveliness to one may be the positive reverse to another. Beauty is regulated by no arbitrary rule. One of your models of perfection, however, is too apt to fall in love with himself. Women cannot be too much upon their guard, or too watchful and exacting in the choice of a lover. It is silly to suffer the affections to be taken captive by beauty, genius, or fascinating powers, before the reason is convinced of the soundness of principle, purity of faith, and integrity of mind of the future husband; for one must look beyond the days of courtship, beyond the calm pleasant evenings, beyond the day of days, the white gloves, and the orange blossoms, all tremulous with the excitement of the wearer, to the long days of adversity, some of which are sure to come, and see how they will be borne.

F. S.—If a man has a ferocious dog on his premises, he must take rigid precautions to prevent him from injuring innocent persons, or else he will be liable for any harm which the dog may inflict on them. He must have warnings such as "Beware of the dog," etc., conspicuously posted on the premises, and must take measures to protect callers or visitors against attacks by the animal. In the case of a tramp who should go into the garden to steal grapes, and be bitten by the dog, it would depend on the facts and circumstances developed on the trial of the case whether or not the bitten man could obtain damages, and how much, if anything, the jury would award him. Unless the owner of the dog should prove, to the satisfaction of the court and jury, that the bitten man's purpose in going into the garden was actually to steal grapes, or to commit some other offence against the law, also show that reasonable precautions had been taken to warn trespassers of the danger of being bitten by the dog, the injured man might get a verdict in his favor.